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10 artists who will change the way you paint

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Welcome... to a clear outlook



Some clever person once said it's good to know your limitations. I have no idea what they were getting at, but I do know that applying limitations to your art can open up new possibilities, can make you look at the blank page in a new light, can be liberating.

Following the mighty Charlie Bowater's striking cover workshop (page 68), we see how taking out colour from the equation can make you focus on value, space and texture.

By limiting your options you can create something unexpected!

Over on page 40 we feature 10 of our favourite artists who have taken similar limitations and made them their own: from Nicolas Delort's clayboard/Photoshop noir landscapes, to Ed Binkley's monochrome masterpieces.

It's not all two-tone. After creating a dazzling stained glass Q&A image back in issue 112, we asked Sara Forlenza to work on a larger piece for a workshop – with added historical drama. She illuminates the cathedral setting of the murder of Thomas Becket on page 86. While in a sunrise scene Brian Matyas offers his insight into concepting efficiently for games and films, mixing 3D and 2D to produce a moody moment filled with narrative (page 80).

I love Patrick J Jones's oil paintings, but I also love his back-to-basics workshop on working with charcoal (page 106), and it's great that on page 56 we finally get to speak to sculptor Forest Rogers. Aaah! Out of room! [Enter clever limitations comment here].

Beren

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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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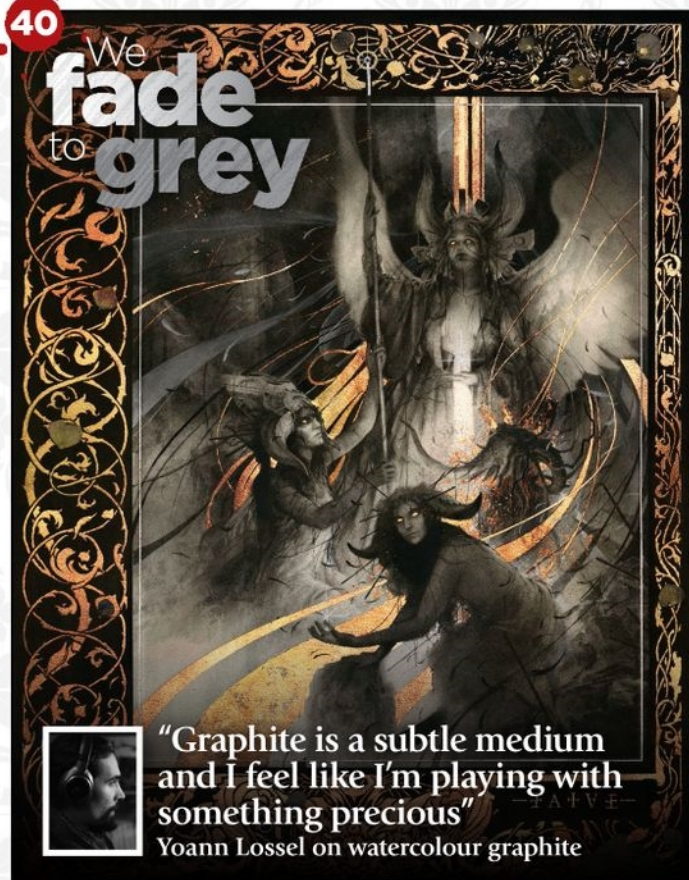
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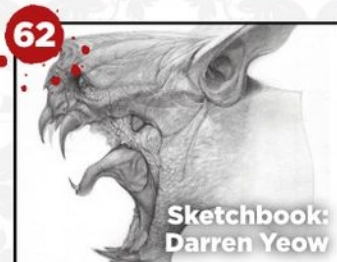
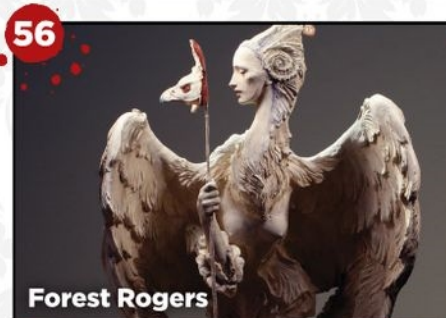


Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 10 for the best new art ➡➡



ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques from pro artists...

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES Turn over the page for this issue's art assets.



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FANTASY illustrator

Inspiration and advice from the best traditional artists

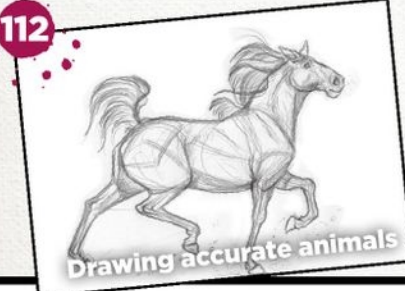
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Resources

Getting hold of all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/black126white>

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of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

COVER WORKSHOP

Paint in black and white

Make the most of limited colours and give your characters extra impact, with Charlie Bowater



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You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

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Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
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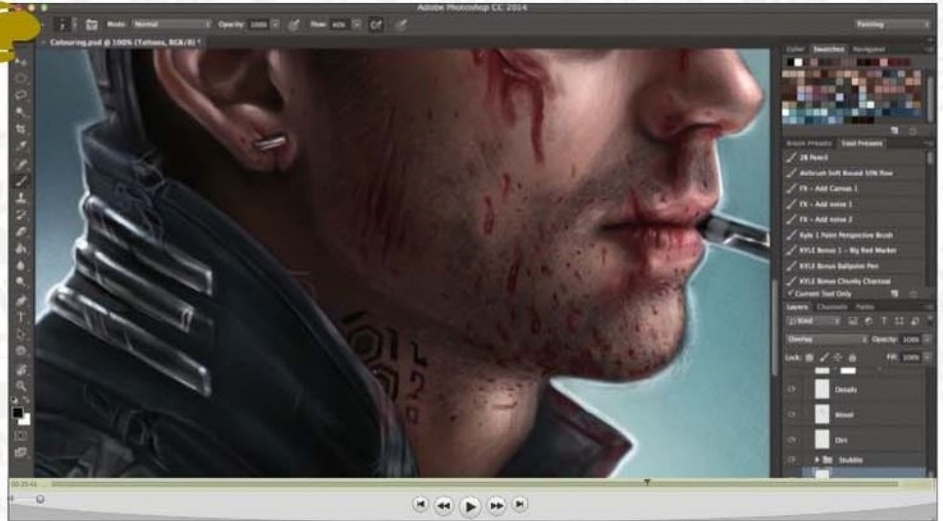
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



Tara Phillips

See how storytelling helps when depicting someone from the wrong side of town...
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image



Brian Matyas

Learn how to produce concept art efficiently, making the most of both 3D modelling and 2D painting skills to help create a story's unmistakably atmospheric moment.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image



Sara Forlenza

Understand how light is crucial to helping portray a dramatic historical scene.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image

Q&A VIDEOS



Bram Sels

Why thinking about the weather may help you paint better environments.
Plus WIPs and final image



Paul Scott Canavan

Learn to manage texture detail in order to paint a convincing crumbling castle.
Plus WIPs and final image



Syd Mead

Hollywood concept artist Syd Mead distils lessons learned over 50 years into the two-hour Airship Arrival video.

AND ALL THIS! WIPs and finished art available to download, created by professional artists from around the world including this issue, Charlie Bowater, Charlotte Creber, Patrick J Jones, Brynn Metheney, Stéphane Richard, Houston Sharp and others.

13 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

BRUSH1

Charlie Bowater uses this often. A touch of texture without being harsh.

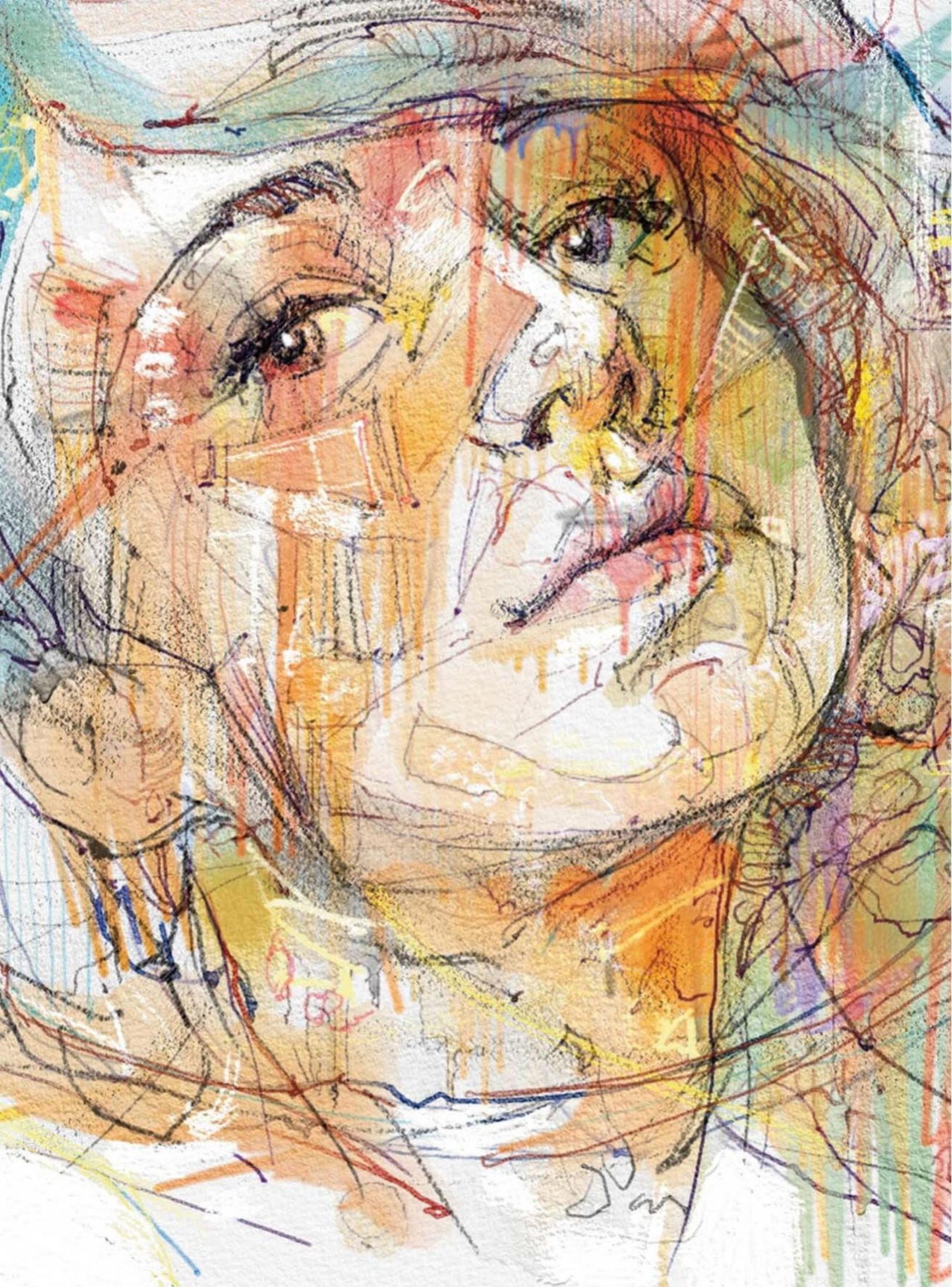
STUBBLE BRUSH

A quick and simple tool for laying down facial hair, says Tara Phillips.

WET BLENDER

One of three used by Stéphane Richard, created via Photoshop's Mixer Brush.







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Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Jessica Tung Chi Lee

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jessicatcl.com

EMAIL: j03150315@hotmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya, SketchUp, KeyShot



Born and raised in Taipei, Taiwan, Jessica came to San Francisco to obtain her MFA. "My influences and inspirations are often from real life," she says.

"I love observing architectural and mechanical objects. The beauty of how structures connect and shape fascinates me, partially thanks to my civil-engineer father. The same goes with anatomy and nature landscapes, whose shapes are inspirational to me."

Most of Jessica's works are hard-core science fiction. She says she loves digital painting, but also finds 3D programs helpful for figuring out the perspective for complex designs.

1



1 THE CRITICAL MOMENT

"This image is depicting the critical moment when the lead character finds out his friend is heading towards the Fusion Deck, the most dangerous place in their space refinery station."

2 LAKE PLAZA "The Lake Plaza, located at the centre of Avalon, is not only where the main train station is, it also serves as an outdoor entertainment area. The plaza can be accessed by personal hovercars, or by the public transportation surrounding the building."

3 CAER TINTAGEL "Tintagel is a dreadful gigantic military compound. It depends on trading of precious resources, both legal and illegal. The main part of the city is for factories and military facilities, and the residential areas, mostly slums, are dirty and chaotic."

© Galaxy Press





1



2



IMAGINEFX CRIT

"I love Sergio's whimsical approach to comic art. His film influences ensure a story is told with every image, and his dynamic use of shapes and colours demonstrate a keen eye for composition."

Alice Pattillo,
Staff Writer

3



1 ROBOT U.345 "One of the recurrent themes in my work is cyberpunk and I prefer to depict it with less realism and more of a cartoonish style, to contrast the classical standard of the genre."

2 PIER "Before I start a drawing I spend some time on the composition, structuring it with simple geometrical shapes. Here the picture has a rhomboidal base, to give more dynamism and lead the eye to the focal points, along with chromatic contrast to emphasise the subject."

3 SPACE DOG "Here I wanted to tell the story behind the character with a single illustration that clearly shows their attitude. To fix the basic shapes I played with the components of a Volkswagen Beetle, applying them to the cabin, in order to convey the retro-futuristic appearance."



Sergio attended the Italian Comix School in Naples for four years, where he was influenced by the world of comics and he

incorporates the main techniques into his illustrations.

"I think that even with a single illustration one has to keep in mind the whole story behind it to give a greater impact and show that it's alive in its own world," says the 20 year old.

His main influences are films. "I often ask myself what lead the director chooses for specific frames and what they wanted to convey with them - to understand how to use it in my works."

He's especially passionate about animation where he finds features such as dynamism, simple yet powerful shapes, and emotional chromatic choices, really interesting.

Michael Edward Thom

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.michaelthom.net

EMAIL: michaelthom@michaelthom.net

MEDIA: Photoshop, Manga Studio



A freelance illustrator, Michael works mostly in fantasy, horror and science fiction. "I have been drawing and painting since I was three or four," he says.

"I was inspired to do fantasy art when I fell in love with Ralph McQuarrie's Star Wars concept art and reading fantasy fiction as a teenager," he recalls.

He generally prefers doing figurative work as he enjoys painting anatomy and faces that have some form of narrative. "My preference tends to lean toward strong females and gritty dark-themed backgrounds."

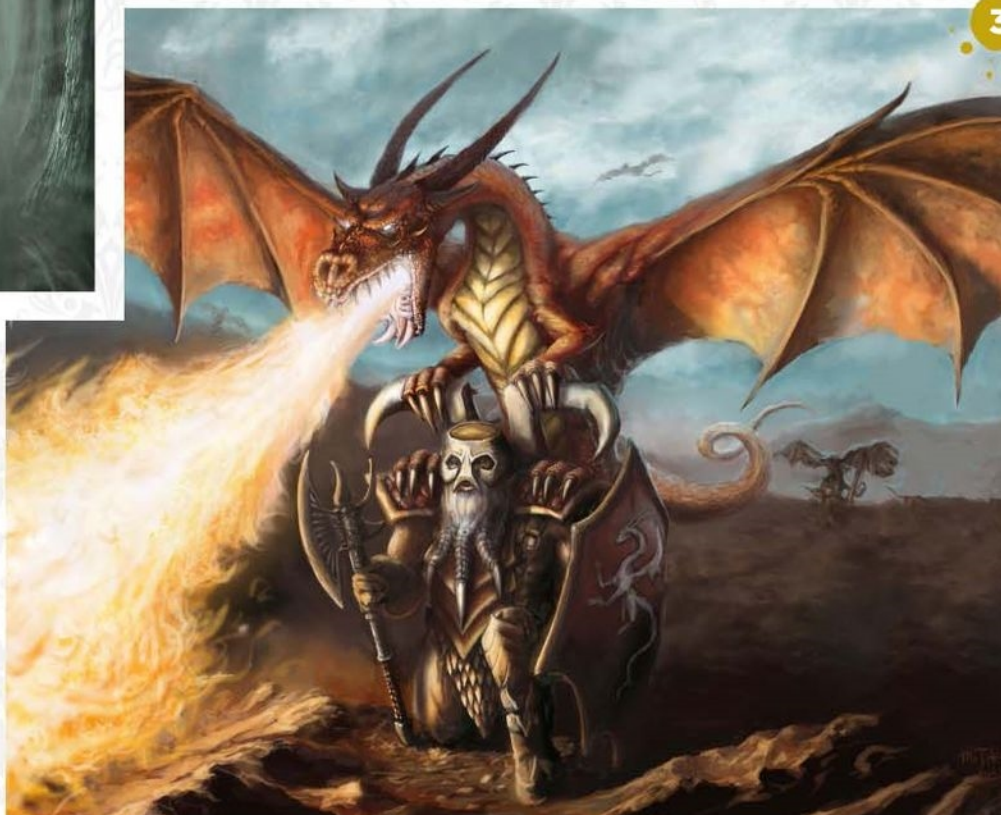
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2



3



1 STRENGTH OF THE MAIDEN "This is a personal work, using my fiancée as reference and is inspired by my affinity for strong female characters. It's intended as a portfolio piece for book publishers, and it did get some great comments from Irene Gallo and Dan dos Santos in portfolio reviews at Spectrum Fantastic Live 2015."

2 SEASON OF THE WITCH "This was also done as a portfolio piece for book publishing. It's inspired by my fascination with witches and stories of witches in fantasy and horror."

3 DWARF DRAGONTRAINER "This was done for Jon Schindehette's ArtOrder challenge, which requested a unique take on dragons. I thought, 'What if there were smaller dwarven dragons and dwarves that trained them for battle, like falcon trainers?'"

Samuel Araya

LOCATION: Paraguay

WEB: www.samarayaart.com

EMAIL: samarayaart@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop, Photography, mixed media



Born and living in the "poisoned heart" of South America, Samuel has worked for clients such as The Seattle Opera House, CCP Games, Centipede Press and many others. His art has also appeared in the prestigious Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art annual.

His latest series, Carcosa, was inspired by the seminal work of Robert W Chambers' *The King in Yellow*. "The work presented here is in a threshold between memory and dream, painting and photography," he says. "Symbolism is created by the juxtaposition of alchemical concepts and Chambers' magnum opus."

1



2



3



1 THE KING IN YELLOW - WHERE BLACK STARS RISE "The King in Yellow by Robert W Chambers was the inspiration for Carcosa, a one man art show in my home town of Asunción. I explored the juxtaposition of the themes in the book and alchemical principles in a variety of media, including digital."

2 THE KING IN YELLOW - CASSILDA'S SONG "Cassilda's Song in The King in Yellow always came to me as an expression of 'nigredo' and 'the dark night of the soul'. Chambers hadn't intended this reading, but I believe complex symbolic systems, such as alchemy, are helpful to understand human experience."

3 THE KING IN YELLOW - BUT STRANGER STILL IS "Chambers borrowed Carcosa from Ambrose Bierce, so it seemed fair to borrow Carcosa from Arnold Böcklin, whose paintings have been an inspiration ever since my childhood."

Iqbal Baihaqi

LOCATION: Indonesia

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EMAIL: iqbalbaihaqi95@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Currently in his second year of studying interior design at ITB, 19-year-old Iqbal started drawing digitally about four years ago, when his high school days "started to get boring".

A friend showed him the magic of digital painting and it sucked him in. "I mainly draw fantasy or sci-fi themed artwork," he says. "It's inspired by film and video game concept artwork."

"I'm still struggling to work my way around digital painting, but I hope I will have a chance to work as a professional illustrator someday."



1 CHARACTER DESIGN : SRIKANDI

"A character design I made for a contest (which I unfortunately didn't win!). She's based on the Indonesian folklore heroine, Srikandi. Depicted as a powerful heroine wielding a bow and arrows with a clear-cut sense of justice, I decided a twist in the design would be nice, hence the mecha armour!"

2 FALLEN ANGEL'S BRIDE "This is a re-drawn version of my earlier work to see how much progress I've made throughout the years. But I've changed so many things in the picture it's barely recognisable as a 're-draw' anymore. Even so, I'm quite satisfied with the result."

3 HUNT YOUR NIGHTMARES "Bloodborne! Words fail to express my love for the game. How they simplify something so convoluted into such a straightforward and insightful game is beyond me. Here I'm trying to capture Bloodborne's philosophy: less is more."

4 UNSEEN REGAL "A first successful attempt at drawing a large landscape. My friend gave me some pointers about giving an impression on landscape painting. It worked like a charm and I'm quite happy with the result."



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IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Wow! Some impressive stuff here, Iqbal. I love the weapons and costumes, and the cool colour schemes and sense of motion you capture. Great stuff."

Beren Neale,
Acting Editor

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY



Weta's Christian Pearce, who painted this piece, is an advocate of working in a studio.



FIGURINE OF FUN

Discover how artist and illustrator Aleksí Briclot has successfully crowdfunded a personal project, and the resultant figurines, for his story of Azzar'Hi. **Page 23**



HOME TO THE DARK ARTS

Skulls, "secret items" and always working in the dark... Ohio-based French artist Bastien Lecouffe Deharme shows us around his unusual workplace. **Page 24**



IT'S SOFA, SO GOOD

Couch potato or artistic ace? Lorin Wood's new book, *Woosh!*, is full of spaceship sketches he drew in under an hour, while he was relaxing on his sofa. **Page 27**

Freelance Vs Studio

Nine to five Going it alone, or finding your feet in a studio. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, but which is right for you?



The Melbourne-based concept artist and illustrator Darren Yeow failed at being freelance twice. Moving back into studio roles, it's only

over the past five years that he's successfully crafted a path for himself - and he wouldn't have it any other way.

However, he's careful to reiterate the significance in deciding upon this particular path for yourself. "Freelancing is a serious undertaking that requires the wearing of numerous hats to pull off successfully," he explains. "As a freelancer, you're running a small business, which requires many non-art related skills that studio artists don't need to contend with."

“You're running a business, which requires many non-art skills that studio artists don't need to contend with”



Darren Yeow recently painted this, on top of his usual workload.

Freelance artist Thomas Frick found time to paint this character for a personal RPG project.



Exactly what skills? "Things like client billing and chasing payment; keeping the books up-to-date; dealing with taxes; health cover; putting funds away for retirement; insurance; paying overheads and investing in skills training are just some of the things that immediately come to mind. These are on top of actually getting client work done."

LIFESTYLE CHOICE

Yet with administrative set-backs, self-discipline and time constraints also comes the ability to choose your own clients and enjoy the finer things in life. "What I love most about my choice as a freelancer," says Darren, "is being able to see my two-year-old son growing up every day. As well as being able to offer him front-row seats to an alternative look at how career and life can intertwine. And of course, getting paid to do that."

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

THOMAS FRICK

This artist started off in a studio, then decided to go freelance...

What did you learn from your time working at a studio?

Joining a studio enabled me to learn how to work in a team and be part of a process. But more than anything, it meant I could improve myself really fast - a lot faster than when I was learning at university.

What made you decide to go freelance?

I had already started doing freelance jobs when I was in the studio, and I didn't want to join another studio immediately afterwards. Even though I was scared, I thought I had to try living by myself and being my own boss. Step by step, I managed to make enough contacts to be able to start working full time, and have enough money to live and eat. I tried to diversify as much as possible. Now clients approach me. I'm pretty comfortable, but it took years to reach this point.

Do you prefer working in a studio or being freelance?

Personally, I'm really happy with my current freelance position and I would suffer if I had to go back to working in a studio. Being in a studio brings a lot of advantages, but there are many advantages in being freelance too: working at home, being able to choose your working hours, having awesome rates if you're talented and reliable, being your own boss, choosing your holidays and your free time.

Any advice for other artists?

Know your environment, look at what others artists do, try to understand how and what they do what they do, be curious and try to improve yourself with what you see. And most importantly, don't fear the future!



Thomas is a 2D and 3D artist working in games and graphic design. He has a master's degree in art and multimedia.

www.xaelgraphics.com



➔ "A nice side-effect is that you get to work on a lot of different projects, instead of



just working for one for years in a studio," adds Jana Schirmer, a freelance artist and illustrator based in Berlin. "I love doing concept

art and I love illustration, and I'm able to do both as a freelancer."

When it comes to clients, however, taking the freelance route comes with its downsides. Simply receiving payment can be struggle. But as Jana explains, it all comes down to the correct contracts. "Don't start working before you see a contract," she continues. "Once I started working for a small client when I had just started freelancing. After finishing the work, I never heard back from him. It wasn't very smart on my end."

But as Darren says, you can take certain steps to ensure potential clients don't turn into a total horror show. "Nightmare clients tend to be new clients, so I begin dealing

Jana Schirmer's fan art of Overwatch's Mercy. She says it's important not to undersell yourself as a freelancer.

Paul Scott Canavan works at indie game studio Blazing Griffin, and painted this image for its game Distant Star: Revenant Fleet.

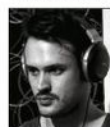
“I’m not a doormat. To bring about the best outcome we need to respect each other’s skill sets and worth”

with them before they turn out to be nightmare clients," he says. "First, the client understands that I intend to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship – not a dictatorship. I'm there to bring flesh to their vision, with their guidance. But I'm not a doormat, and in order to bring about the best outcome, we need to respect each other's skill sets and worth."

"If you communicate this part in the right way, this won't offend good clients. In fact, most will appreciate this as a mark of one professional to another – but it will bring out red flags in egotistical prima-donna types."

FUN AND GAMES

However, working within a studio doesn't necessarily mean you can escape difficult clients. "If it's clearly going nowhere I'll just step away," says Blazing Griffin lead artist



Paul Scott Canavan. "Don't make a fuss. Sometimes these people are just going through some trouble and I always try not to burn bridges,"

Having art-directed Distant Star: Revenant Fleet, The Thirty-Nine Steps, Dino Tribes and APB: Retribution, Paul has worked on a range of huge projects and puts a safeguard in place. "I always ask for 50 per cent of the commission up front and only deliver the final product on receipt of the second 50 per cent."

While you can't escape difficult clients either way, working in a studio does allow you to flourish in creative collaboration; gaining constructive criticism and building friendships to ensure you produce the best work possible. "Freelance life is great in many ways – oh, how I miss 11am starts! – but there's nothing like working with a group of friends to inspire you and make every day exciting," continues Paul.

Weta concept artist Christian Pearce couldn't agree more. "I love the people and all the interesting stuff that happens here," he says. "Weta is different to most design studios in that there's a full workshop here – engineering,

model-making, 3D, moulding and casting, sculpting, paint shop – every time you get out of your chair you bump into people doing something you don't know how to do and they're really freaking good at it."

Whether you want to get into the industry through internships and applications, or prefer to go it alone, there's an overlapping aspect to both endeavours, as Paul concludes. "I turned down a couple of fairly large jobs because I didn't feel ready and was afraid of meeting new people," he says. "But the longer you spend in this industry, the more you'll learn that everyone is just like you really. Take the plunge – it's always worth doing!"



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Most creative people – including the ImagineFX team – will say that their obsession with all things arty is both a blessing and a curse. A blessing, because there's always something new to create, and new art to be inspired by. A curse, because it can often be a struggle to tear yourself away from your computer or tablet.

Take shopping. While some people love to spend hours online looking for bargains, we'd rather spend all our days sketching or viewing online portfolios. That doesn't mean we don't like saving money, of course – we've just got better things to do.

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Azzar'Hi has a claw arm, with which she can summon spectral creatures. After her world collapses, her notion of good and evil is questioned.



"This Kickstarter campaign was a lot of work!" says Aleks. "We have some more goodies to produce, such as special prints, stickers and T-shirts."



From a simple cover drawing Aleks has developed a whole universe, finally writing and illustrating a story of his own.

Figuring the next step...

Sculpting sentiments A successful move into crowdfunding has enabled artist and illustrator Aleks Briclot to create an audience for his personal project



After working as a video games art director and concept artist, illustrating numerous comic books including Todd McFarlane's

Spawn and card art for Magic: The Gathering, artist Aleks Briclot found it was time to do something personal.

His move to sell his own artistic creation has proven so far, so good, with a successful Kickstarter campaign generating the funds and devotees to start something he's really passionate about: the story of Azzar'Hi.

He created the character especially for the cover of his book, *Worlds and Wonders*,

has since mapped out a universe that explores his character's narrative, and is now teasing fans with statues, in collaboration with figurine company Tsume Art.

"The Azzar'Hi statue is the first step towards building this universe and this story," says Aleks. "It may sound like Tsume and myself didn't start things in the right order, but this is the succession of all these different opportunities - the artbook, the statue... - that feeds the idea of doing something bigger.

"This is a huge and complex statue," continues Aleks. "But we took care of the practicalities and production aspects before launching the crowdfunding campaign.



A leaflet inside each box will have extra sketches, visuals and notes, plus more details about the universe and the character.

There'll be a leaflet inside the box with extra sketches, visuals and notes, such as on the making of the statue with details about the creation process, as well as the universe and the character."

Flush from the success of his launch campaign, Aleks is keen to develop the project further and is currently writing the entire story. "This project is quite personal for me, so I don't want to rush. But it could be pretty cool to produce some more statues, or a board game!"

You can see more of Aleks's art at www.artstation.com/artist/aleksi. You can also visit <http://ifxm.ag/aleksib> to see more of the Azzar'Hi figurine itself.



I work with Photoshop and an Intuos tablet. I need a monitor for Photoshop and another for references, music and so on.

This is a painting of my spouse, Whitney, the first one I made of her after we met. It's also a work that defined many major directions in my art after that.

This is the tip of the iceberg. I collect weapons like this for references and fun times in the woods at night.

Bastien Lecouffe Deharme

Order and chaos The French illustrator opens up his Ohio office and discusses his dream workspace, darkness and his "secret items"



I call this space my 'office' so it sounds a bit serious. It's a very important space for me, since I spend the majority of my time here.

The room is on the top floor of my house, on a hillside of a tiny town in southern Ohio, where I live with my spouse and cats.

Depending on my workflow, the place can get completely chaotic, invaded by reference objects, cats, models, photography lights and so on. I alternate between chaos and order. When a project is over, I can't start the next one without



Always good to look at muscle structure. That said, working with live models is preferable.

a complete clean of everything. I basically live in that room.

Some day, I'll buy a great house in the forest and I'll have two rooms. One will be full of books, music and objects - called the 'chaos room' - for references and mood. And from that room, through a hidden door in the bookshelf, I'll access the 'work room'. It'll have one window, nothing on the white walls, a hardwood floor, table with a computer, drawing table, chair for models and a space for oil painting. Nothing else.

The room in this picture is a mixture of both. In the photo, it appears bright and

clear, but the space is almost always kept in darkness with heavy curtains. Darkness helps my focus, and I work mostly at night.

I set the mood the way I want, depending on where I'm working in the 'office'. There are three different spaces in it: the computer table, the drawing table and a space with books, references and chair. I move around these different settings all day and night. There is also a big closet where I store prints, drawings, canvases and secret items that I'd better not talk about in a public article.

I think that having such a space to work in is essential for a freelancer, in order to

When the first Magic cards I created arrived in the mail I asked a friend what to do with them. He said, "Frame it and put it on your wall!" Well... I just did that!

This is where I pin everything. I mean everything! Doodles, business cards, references, flies, jewellery, money, deadline-stickers and 3am genius ideas.



This table is "relax time". Sketches and charcoals. When I sit there, the computer disappears from my sight, and this is a rare pleasure!

maintain a sane dynamic. When I'm 'in', I'm at work. When I'm 'out', I'm available for some time off.

Away from work I run, hike and do a lot of physical activities. It helps me to keep a balance. I avoid by all means the decay of the body, the calling of the screen and the comfort of the chair! I work so much better with a refreshed brain.

Bastien is an illustrator working for major companies including Adobe, Random House and National Geographic. He's represented by Shannon Associates. Check out his work at www.deharme.com.



References for sketches. I usually set lights up on this furniture and make personal little compositions as studies.

He's alive, just very calm and silent since Maleficent fired him.

Dahlia Elizabeth Ginger Snaps is my nightly companion. She's always the first one to see previews of the images I'm working on.



I keep all my books in other rooms - these are the ones I like to keep close to me in case of technical emergencies!



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Hatboy

by Vaughn Pinpin



Sofa spaceships have lift off!

Doodle designs Mech aficionado Lorin Wood's latest book is a showcase of spaceship sketches, all drawn from the comfort of his full-length couch



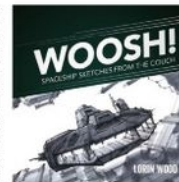
Since watching *Transformers* as a pre-teen, Lorin Wood has been obsessed with drawing mechs. This fascination of his has since spread beyond his job, as lead conceptual designer at Gearbox Studios, and into his free time.

In the world of mechs, Lorin Wood is a giant. He's the creator of Nuthin' But Mech (NBM), a blog that collects the web's best

robot drawings, and has also released two print volumes based on the site.

For his latest book, *Woosh!*, Lorin attempted to relax his imagination by drawing from his couch. "The primary reason," says Lorin, "was that I was just tired, lazy and didn't want to sit up." Though he adds: "It was in part a personal challenge, to see if I could draw from an oblique angle."

Sketched in Moleskines and on Strathmore paper, Lorin drew spaceships

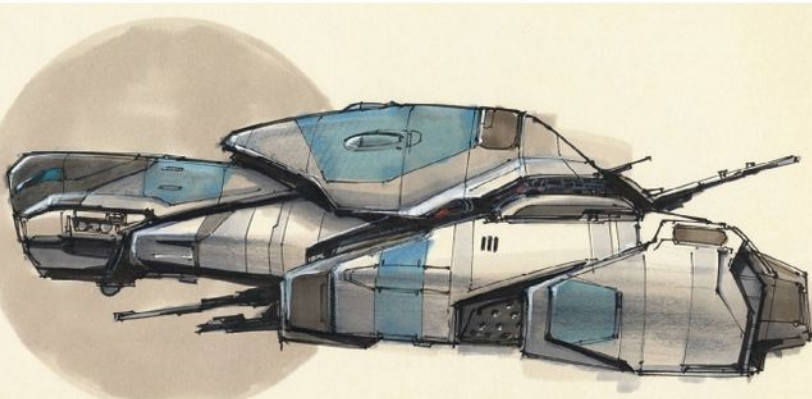


Many of the sketches in *Woosh!* are Lorin's take on classic Star Wars spaceship designs.

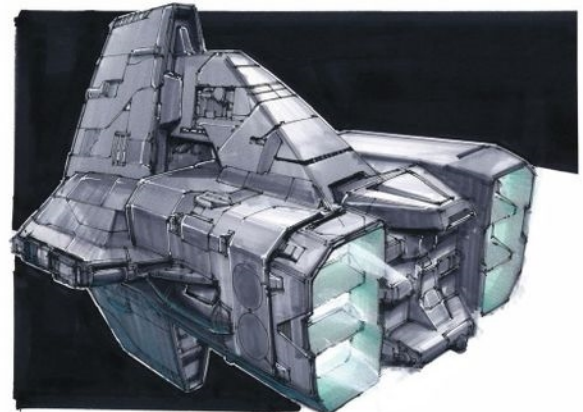
inspired by Star Wars and the 1985 film *Explorers*. Each sketch took under an hour, with Lorin completing the whole collection in just over two months.

Woosh! is out now, followed by *Nuthin' But Mech 3* in October. Proceeds raised by NBM2 and NBM3 will go to the wife of talented contributing artist Francis Tsai, who recently passed away.

You can see more of Lorin's work - and purchase *Woosh!* - at www.lorinwood.com.



Lorin describes the sketches in *Woosh!* as "visual ramblings of a designer on the verge of losing consciousness."



Cargo Ship III took Lorin just 30 minutes to complete, using pen, marker and white paint pen.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact Acting Editor, Beren Neale, on beren@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Plc, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK



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Art upside down

I'm a painter in Australia and picked up your mag the other day. It's great – a fantastic publication! Here are just a few images of my work. I'd really appreciate your opinion. I mainly work on a commission only basis, but these are the start of a body of work I'm doing for a show. Thanks for your time and, once again: great mag!

Andrew Siambis, via email



Australia-based artist Andrew Siambis has just found ImagineFX and sent us some of his art.

Beren replies Thanks Andrew. Great to hear that you're doing a show. You definitely create striking art. The only advice worth giving is to keep at it! Look in magazines, online and got to art classes for more ways to create the art you want to create. Be a sponge, soak up all the tips and tricks you can find, and never give up. Good luck!

Pulling faces

I really enjoyed issue 124. Regarding the letter from Kris concerning an issue focusing on cartoons and caricatures, I would wholeheartedly support this and hope enough other readers do too, so you can give it serious consideration. For instance, I really enjoyed the issue on comic art some months ago (117), but it did rather focus on the superhero genre. How about looking more closely at other style of comics and graphic novels?

Chris Dyson, via email

Beren replies Hey Chris! It's funny you should say that. Our next comic art issue will include caricature art and a varied look at comic characters. I'd love to say more, but you'll have to wait for issue 128!

Female-coddling?

I'm writing about this gender bias topic and in particular the effect it had on issue 123. We can't deny that this industry is dominated by males and I'm not really interested in discussing why it's the case. What bothers me is this twisted thought



Patrick Grant is annoyed by Serge Birault's comments that "Women are stronger than men", from issue 123.

that to make up for it we should be giving them special attention. Having worked in the CGI industry, I've seen this female-coddling behaviour in the studio and it annoys me that we can't just appreciate art for what it is – we have to find it more impressive when it's made by an artist with ovaries. I'm all for equality. But this isn't it.

As if this wasn't bad enough, your magazine went one step further in issue 123. The article on Zoë Mozert had the tagline, "Zoë was better than the men..." And the Serge Birault interview finished with: "Women are stronger than men". Why even include this? This isn't promoting equality. Or feminism. It's straight-up man hate. This is the crap I expect from Tumblr "feminists" and is very disappointing that you would publish it. ImagineFX used to just be about the art, but if this is the direction things are going, count me out.

Patrick Grant, via email

Beren replies Hi Patrick. We've had a lot of response to this topic, but I think it's worth addressing for as long as readers bring it up.

To answer your points, the first comment from the Zoë Mozert feature was taken from a quote by a (male) pin-up expert. The other is from the artist Serge Birault himself. These are valid opinions, whether you agree with them or not.

We believe articles promoting talented female artists, in an industry that historically hasn't given women their due, is a good thing. It's not 'female-coddling'. The feature celebrated Zoë's art in the context that her contemporaries thought she was ace. Yet compared to her fellow male pin-up artists, she remains unknown. That's reason enough to hit home the point that a pin-up expert thinks she was better than the guys. If a girl, or boy, reads the feature and gets inspired to create art, our job is done.

As for Serge – that's his view, in his words. From an artist who creates super-sexy pin-ups, it's refreshing to hear it comes from a place of respect, not objectification.

As you say, you're not interested in discussing why this industry is dominated by men. But we are. We want to discuss it, to hear the views of men and women in the industry, because we want the world of concept art, illustration, fine art and pin-up to be open to everyone.



DID YOU MISS OUR FANTASY ILLUSTRATION SPECIAL?

Turn to page 54 for more details on our brilliant issue 125, and others too!

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Mark Maccarthy
[@markmccarthyar1](https://twitter.com/markmccarthyar1)

"Hi this is one of my latest #drawings using #ipad with #procreate. #happyfriday"



Will Cartwright
[@wrcillustration](https://twitter.com/wrcillustration)

"Tried my hand at creature design and came up with these guys: crystaliths"



Grey @ SMASH 39
[@GreyRadian](https://twitter.com/GreyRadian)

"Painting study" #art #painting"



Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!

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The Create More website is bursting with inspiration and advice for artists. Sign up to it today and get your hands on a host of freebies!

We're big fans of Wacom at ImagineFX. So we're excited to see that the company's launched a dedicated website for artists and illustrators, packed full of useful resources.

Sign up to the Create More website and you'll get instant access to tutorials and ebooks from internationally recognised artists. The site also features downloadable brush sets and tablet preferences, as well as a range of special offers. You can also choose to sign up to the Wacom community, enabling you to benefit from tips and tricks, regular newsletters and extra inspirational content.

BE INSPIRED BY MISS LED!

Miss Led is an artist who's known for detailed and lushly rendered digital and traditional pieces. She's written an ebook tutorial full of tips for artists, and it's free to download from the Create More site when you sign up to Wacom's newsletter.

And if all this wasn't enough, here's one more reason to sign up to the Create More site. Wacom has teamed up with ImagineFX and Creative Bloq to give you the chance to win some amazing prizes.

We want you to show off your skills, so we're asking you to create an illustration, based on advice from Miss Led's ebook. Anything goes, so unleash your imagination and create something that reflects your own personal style and artistic vision!

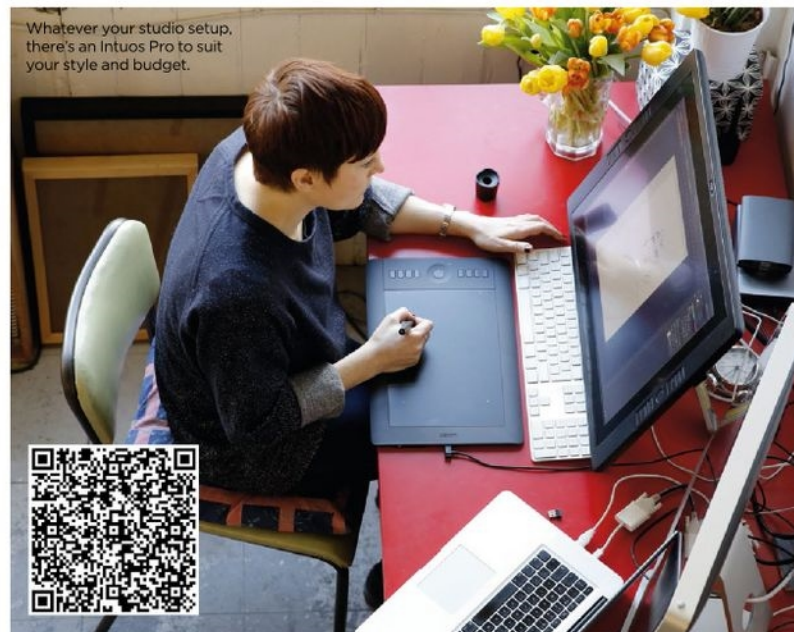
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- 3 Go to <http://bit.ly/1JZ3w3Z> and download the ebook tutorial entitled eBook: Portraiture Refined from.
- 4 Read the tutorial, use it as inspiration to create your own illustration and email it to contest@wacom.eu. Good luck!



Whatever your studio setup, there's an Intuos Pro to suit your style and budget.



Be inspired by the tips in Miss Led's ebook and create an original illustration that showcases your individual style - like her self-portrait, shown here.

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Artist Q&A

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The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

Houston Sharp



Houston is a freelance illustrator and concept artist for film and games. He's also a student at Art Center College of Design, in Pasadena, California.

www.houstonsharp.artstation.com

Jakob Eirich



Jakob graduated in graphic design in 2009 and has been freelancing since. He's keen to tell stories with his illustrations and create worlds that he'd love to explore himself.

www.jakobeirich.de

Bram Sels



Bram is an Illustrator and concept artist from Belgium who's been working as a freelancer for three years, for companies such as Ubisoft and Centipede Press.

www.artofboco.com

Charlotte Creber



The Welsh freelance character artist lives in London and creates concept art and illustrations for games, film and publication. She works mainly in oil and digital.

www.creberart.com

Paul Scott Canavan



Paul is the lead artist at Scottish indie game studio Blazing Griffin and a freelance illustrator. His work has featured in numerous games, films and books.

www.paulscottcanavan.com

Artist Q&A Need our advice?

Email help@imaginefx.com with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!



Using both subject matter and compositional tools, a specific story moment - complete with its own emotional tone - is established.

Question
What techniques can I use to make my female warrior appear more interesting?
Jess Bailey, US

Answer Houston replies



There are multiple ways to depict any one scene in a story, and each approach will develop the narrative a little bit differently. Determining what you're trying to say about the story moment is important, because knowing what you want to say will determine your artistic and compositional choices: the "how" to say it.

In this case, I decide that I want a quiet moment: the last surviving warrior is standing alone after a deadly battle, almost in disbelief that she's alive.



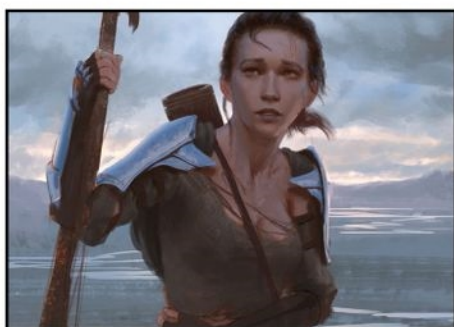
Unify colours by creating a coloured layer, and change the blending mode and lower the Opacity. Erase out areas that you don't need affected.

We can use subject matter and details (such as facial expressions and body language, wounds/scars and the setting) to tell the story, but we can also use compositional tools to evoke specific feelings. For example, colour is to an image what a musical score is to a film. The image on screen may tell us what's happening, but the accompanying music tells us how to feel about it. I want my story moment to be quiet and serene, so I use cool colours that are close to each other on the colour wheel. This creates a sense of cold repose.

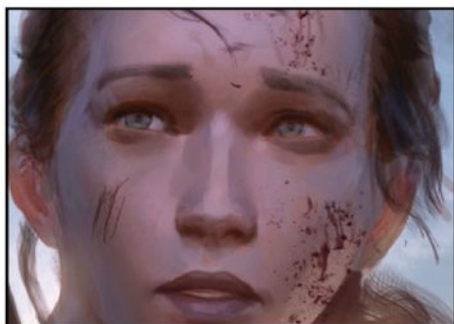
Step-by-step: Creating a strong story moment



1 I begin by making sure the body language and facial expression are telling the story I want it to. The warrior is hurt, so the pose needs to reflect that. She's slightly hunched over, gripping her side, and is having to shift her weight on to her longbow in order to stand. Her facial expression needs to show exhaustion.



2 I now choose the colours and values. To maintain my theme of a quiet aftermath, I avoid anything that would imply or evoke excitement: stark contrasts of value or colour, overly saturated hues, for example. I try to keep my value shifts subtle, and confine my colour choices to one area of the colour wheel.



3 I add small details to suggest at what has happened to her. I paint dried blood spatters of her enemies, show scratches and dented armour, place one remaining arrow in her quiver and give her torn clothing. The image should be successful without these details, but they add an extra level of depth.

Question

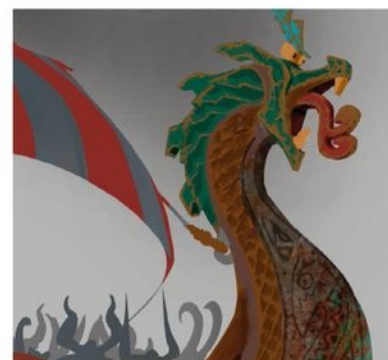
Can you give me some advice on simplifying a complex composition?

Timmy Bevan, England

I always try to push the look with different adjustment layers. Even after I've finished painting, the art is almost never complete!



At this point I just think about the value. I pick a red tone I like and paint the tongue.



Answer

Jakob replies



When I approach a complex painting I always try to think several steps ahead to work out the easiest and fastest way to my desired goal. So for this task I want to paint a Viking ship figurehead with a variety of materials. I also want the ship to feature different and interesting colours and patterns, and place it in a atmospheric setting. Painting these ideas all at once would be a real pain. So how do I approach it? By splitting all tasks into little digestible bits.

I start off with the drawing, where I just focus on composition and design. It doesn't have to be too clean, but the more design questions I answer at this point the less work I have to put in on the design later on.

After that I'll block in the most important shapes on separate layers and lock the transparency. This way I can go wild with my brushes, but will always maintain a clean shape.

Now that I've got my shapes I start adding colour. I just pick the ones I need and put it in without thinking about light and shadow.

After that I get to the light and mood part. I use layer and brush modes such as Color Dodge, Multiply, Lighten and so forth. I establish my light sources and start rendering the materials in the way I think they would react to them.

Artist's secret

ESTABLISH A CLEAR HIERARCHY
Hierarchy is one of the key elements in a good illustration. Always be sure about what you want the viewer to look at first. My focal point here is the figurehead and everything else is very loose and Loki... I mean low key!



Question

What tips do you have for depicting a volcanic scene?

Sandy Skelton, US

Answer

Bram replies



When painting an environment I always think about the mood and story I want it to convey. An important factor in creating a convincing story for an outdoors setting is the weather and temperature.

In the case of this volcanic scene I want to enhance the feeling that it's a dangerous place to be. This is because it's full of red-hot lava! One way to do this is to use sharp, pointed shapes instead of soft, rounded ones. It also helps to use a warm, orange colour scheme, with a hazy yellow, almost poisonous, sky. Once you have an idea about the mood you want to convey it's important to have every element in your scene support that choice.

My process for painting lava is fairly straightforward. I start by blocking out the bigger shapes of the rocks and mountains and then add a layer on top. I then paint the lava in a dark, warm orange on top of this. Then I add an Overlay layer on top and use a big Soft brush and a warm red to go over the lava and give it a glow to heat up the elements surrounding it.

After that I add another Overlay layer on top and go back in with a smaller brush and a bright yellow to boost the lava in places where the streams are thickest. The denser the lava, the warmer and brighter it will become. Finally, I add small details such as rising smoke, embers wafting along on the warm air currents and a dragon to the environment, which helps to give the image some narrative.



The key to making an environment feel warm is in the colour temperature. Using a lot of warm colours such as red, orange and yellow helps to make it feel just right.



Making lava feel hot isn't particularly difficult. Just keep on adding Overlay layers on top of each other to boost the heat coming off of it.

Artist's secret

HOT STUFF COMING THROUGH!
Overlay layers and big soft brushes are the best of friends. Using a warm red over your lava can help to push the heat that's coming off it. The reds will enhance the colours in the rocks and make them feel incredibly hot.

I make my refinements during the final stages. I simplify certain areas and make others more interesting, until the design is well balanced.



Question

How can I paint figures from folklore in a fresh light?

Jason Jelf, Wales

Answer

Jakob replies



I chose Medusa for this task and before I start drawing I do some research. This stage is crucial, because you need to get to know your subject! What are its most important features? How was it drawn hundreds of years ago? How is it depicted in recent illustrations, films or video games? Doing this groundwork also means I become aware of what's been done before, and what to avoid if I want to find a new and fresh direction.

To give my character an original twist I consider experimenting with different

genres. How about a zombie Medusa? A mutant Medusa? A cyborg or robot? If you don't have a specific brief then you have a wide range of possibilities to explore. Pick one or two and carry out the same research as for Medusa herself, but this time look for ways these genres are depicted in different media. Don't copy what you see, though. Take what you like and mix it with things you find in real life. These can be totally unrelated objects or your own ideas.

Taking this approach will give you a better chance to create something fresh, that no one has thought of before.

Question

How would I design a rifle for a non-human character?

Stephan Carney, England

Answer

Houston replies



As cool and fascinating as some guns may look, it's important to keep in mind that most design choices

behind the gun's conception are made purely with function in mind. So if we want to design a gun for a non-human character, we need to know more about that specific character. What is its anatomy like? How does it move? How does it fight: stealthily, or all guns blazing? Once we know more about the character, we can apply what we know to its weapon.

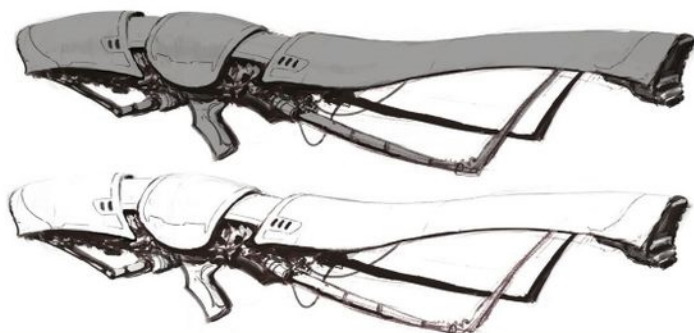
The proportions of the character will determine the proportions of the gun parts. For example, my non-human, insect-like character has lengthy arms, so the gun's shoulder stock has to be long enough to accommodate this.

Just as the art and architecture of a culture are a direct reflection of that

culture, the aesthetic of our weapon should be a reflection of the species it's designed for – or rather, designed by. Are they an efficient species or a barbaric one? Do they like long, elegant curves or sharp angles? Are they wealthy enough to afford stylish guns, or are their guns function-only and made as cheaply as possible? An easy way

Part functional design, part aesthetic shape language: a weapon should be a reflection of the character it's designed for.

to determine this and create consistency between your character and their weapon is to have them share certain visual characteristics, such as the insect-like carapace covering the mechanical bits in my design. When others see the weapon, they should know who it belongs to, just based on how it looks.



I keep my sketch on the topmost layer, and set it to Multiply. That way, I can try out different options for colours, values and graphics on the layers underneath.

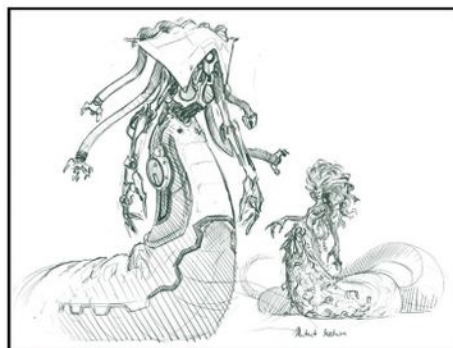
Artist's secret

KEEPING IT LOOSE!



Although tight line work is impressive, it can sometimes look lifeless. Being sketchy injects some charm into drawings. Furthermore, loose sketches engage the viewer, because the looseness demands some personal interpretation.

Step-by-step: Redefining a mythological creature



1 The idea is key, so this is what you should focus on when you start a design. Put down a couple of sketches to generate different approaches. Usually I produce my best results after I've got the initial ideas out of my head. Here I draw a mutant Medusa and a sci-fi Medusa.



2 Value and shape is something you need to always have an eye on. You should even write it on a piece of paper and stick it to your wall in front of your desk! Both should be optimised to a point where it's interesting to look at, even from greater distance or with no shading at all.



3 Add colour and put my Medusa in an environment I imagine she would dwell in. To add visual interest I play with a spotlight. If your illustration is all about design in a production pipeline you shouldn't have fancy light and very dark areas, for maximum readability.

Question

What advice do you have for designing and painting a market scene?

Della Rainson, Australia

Answer

Charlotte replies



Painting a market scene gives you the chance to create something vibrant and visually interesting. Use repetitive

shapes and directional patterns to draw the eye deeper into your composition, and add interest by using high saturation lighting and layering textured brushes. If you're drawing a fantasy market you can afford to exaggerate these elements for greater effect by aiming to create contrast. Your focus here will be on the ambience of the scene, so be confident of your light sources and don't be afraid to clutter your composition!

As you plot out your scene, give thought to the stalls you want at the forefront. These will give you a chance to render exotic and interesting materials that add a storytelling element to the environment, and enhance your chosen lighting conditions. For example, do you want specular reflective metals? Fine fabrics that filter your light sources? Incense that adds a diffusive, smokey film to certain areas? Each of these will give your painting a different mood, so making these decisions early on can be beneficial, enabling you to block out your composition with a confidence that will be reflected by the final result.

Use repeating directional patterns to lead the eye of the viewer through your scene. Loosen up your brushstrokes to keep your scene lively and dynamic.



Manually control the saturation of your paint using the HSB sliders (press F6 in Photoshop) to keep the colour of your lighting fresh and vivid.

Artist's secret

PAINTING WITH THE LASSO TOOL

Using Photoshop's Lasso tool is a quick way to maintain hard edges in your painting. Simply use the tool to draw an outline on a new layer, and paint freely inside this selection.

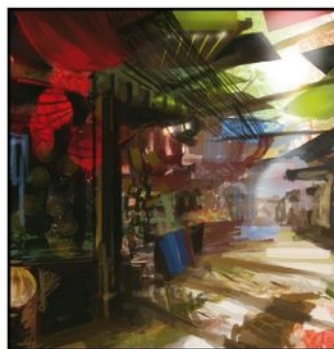
Step-by-step: Painting a market



1 Start by splashing down colour on to the canvas to plot the composition. I also change brushes to build up textures that can be picked out later. I decide that I want coloured flags and awnings to form the centre of the painting and help to lead the eye from foreground to background, and sketch this out using the Lasso tool, adding a dark frame to suggest a shadowed interior.



2 Using a high Opacity brush, I block out the scene further. Strong, hard lines are essential at this stage if you started a painting without a tight sketch: they help to solidify the perspective of the scene. I decide that I want to use a bright noon sun that will enable me to create heavy saturated shadows along the floor, contrasted by the soft glow of a lamp store.



3 When defining a stall I tackle texture first before detail, to try and emulate the sensory overload of being in a marketplace. Contrast is another way to add this kind of visual interest: I use a Soft brush at 100 per cent white for the main lighting, intersected and framed by hard dark edges and linear patterns. I emphasise my lighting choices by depicting reflective materials.



4 I add detail to the scene, introducing a figure and building on existing textures and defining the shape of the background stalls. I add directional repetitive patterns to keep the eye moving around the canvas, contrasting soft, circular shapes with hard lines. Finally I use a Soft wide brush (set to Linear Dodge) in a saturated warm colour to enhance the existing lighting.

Question

Can you help my art look like it was done in traditional oils?

Alec Dunbar, US



Don't be afraid to paint loosely! Work over the top of your mistakes rather than just undoing them, and try to emulate the organic traditional painting process.

Answer

Charlotte replies



Digital art is full of shortcuts and tricks that can make the painting process a whole lot quicker. However, these same tricks can quickly erode the 'traditional' look of a painting, even if you start with a hand-drawn sketch.

You can overcome this by treating your digital art like a real-life canvas; working on as few layers as possible (a single layer is ideal), and using large, textured brushes at 100 per cent Opacity.

To achieve the look of an oil painting, I start with a dark raw-umber underpainting

(I recommend painting by hand and avoid using the Fill tool) just to cover the canvas and remove the unnatural 100 per cent white background. Over this, block out your painting using wide, opaque strokes and textured brushes with a hard edge. You can find plenty of these online, along with replica oil brushes.

Minimise your use of the Erase and Lasso tools, and keep your brush and layer settings to Normal where possible. The Smudge tool can be useful here in moderation. Again, switch to a textured brush type and blend small areas at a time.



Use hard, textured brushes at a high Opacity to complete your painting. Try to avoid unnaturally shaped brushes like the default Hard and Soft Round.

Artist's secret

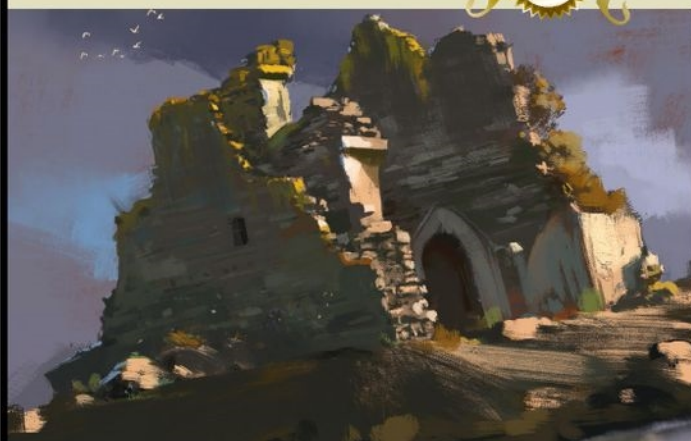
UNDERPAINTING

Adding an extra layer of colour underneath your starting sketch can really enhance your painting, whether you're going for a digital or traditional look. Underpainting will help unify the colour as well as define the tonal value of your scene.

Question

I want to portray a ruined castle... help!

James Yip, US



I study my reference photos to understand the perspective of this castle, in particular where areas of the stone have crumbled away.

Answer

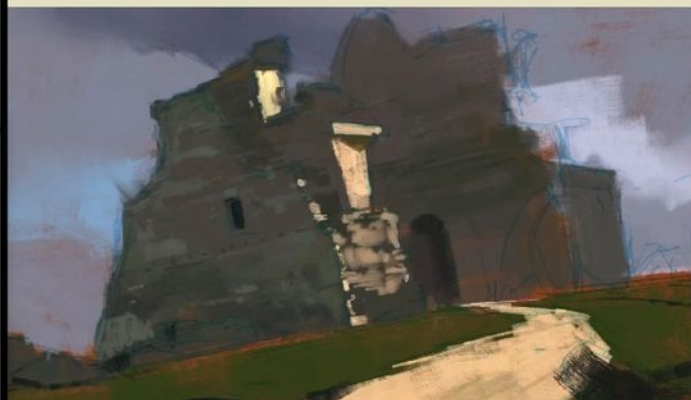
Paul replies



Castles are tricky to paint. Their surfaces are angular and uneven, pockmarked with age and discoloured by the weather. Such problems are only exacerbated when they begin to fall apart!

The key to painting a scene involving a crumbling castle is managing texture detail. While it's tempting to meticulously draw every single stone or to apply a photograph texture on an Overlay layer over your work, these approaches often lead to a muddy final image. I want to simplify the overall shapes using chunky brushes and by paying attention to how the light hits the surfaces.

After sketching a rough idea of my composition in Photoshop I start looking for some photo references. Google is your friend here, and a quick search for "crumbling castle" brings up a wealth of helpful images. The reason I want to use reference rather than just jumping in to painting from imagination is that although I have an idea of what a ruined castle might look like, it isn't something I've drawn often. Having reference images will help you to fill in the gaps of your knowledge and in this case it shows me how the light plays over the stone. Squint your eyes and pay attention to the big shapes and areas of contrast on the stone; these are the things you should focus on when you paint the castle. I hint at smaller details to break up the surfaces, but am careful not to push the detail too far.



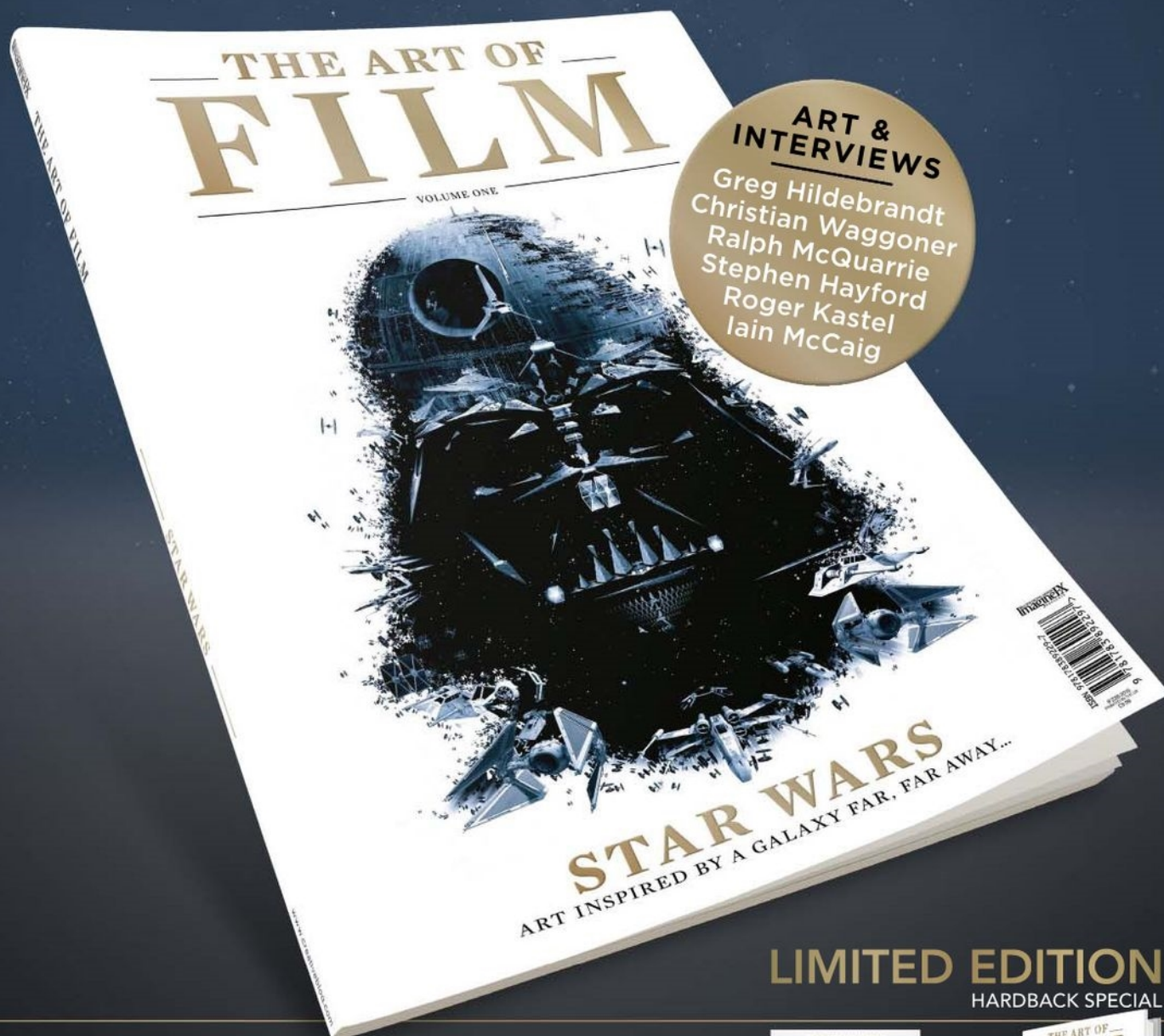
I start by blocking out the large shapes in a shadow tone, then begin painting the light areas on top to bring out the forms in 3D.

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Question

How would you paint a storm in space?

Mena Fiore, Canada



This swirling vortex storm didn't take too long to create because I used photo textures.

Answer

Paul replies



One of the major challenges you face when painting a space image is deciding how sci-fi you want to go. Space itself is pretty empty and dark, and the crazy visual effects that you see in today's blockbuster films tend to be a little less scientific and more fictional. The entertainment industry is all about spectacle, so for this particular article I'm going to focus on a storm that could work in a game or film.

Whenever you come to paint something that doesn't exist, it's important to bring in elements that the audience can relate to. In this case, when I'm thinking about how to portray a space storm I'm imagining tornadoes, clouds and lightning – perhaps a swirling vortex that would suck in spaceships like a black hole.

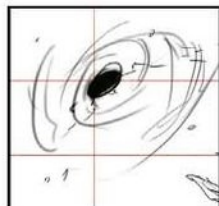
Next, I save some photos of storms for use as textures. I want the painting to have the feel of concept art – something you

could show an art director to describe the shot if this were a film or an in-game effect, so using photo textures will quickly give me that realistic feel.

After applying a few textures I can paint directly on top of this base to blend everything together. Think about additional effects that can help sell this vortex, such as flying debris or small ships being sucked into it. Try to tell a story with the image and it'll be far more successful!

Step-by-step: Paint an interstellar tempest

1. I begin by loosely sketching out a composition. The focal point of this painting will be the storm of course, but I consider adding a couple of ships to give it a human element. The red lines are



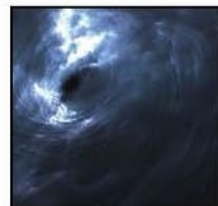
guidelines for the Rule of Thirds; placing objects of interest on to those lines or, even better, on to a cross will draw the eye to those elements.

2. The next step is to create a suitable celestial backdrop for the raging storm. I fill the canvas with black and then use a large Soft brush to begin painting the overall area that the storm will fill,



using my line work from the previous step as a guide. I also dab in some random distant stars into the scene, because this is space after all!

3. I use two photo textures here: one of a storm and one of a whirlpool. I use the Distort tool to fix any perspective issues, set the layer mode to Color Dodge and then paint out any unwanted information.



It's worth experimenting with different layer modes when applying textures. You might produce unusual results that are worth keeping.

NEXT MONTH: BRING A CREATURE DESIGN TO LIFE | ADVICE FOR USING REFERENCE PHOTOS | PAINT EXPRESSIVE EYES | ANIMATE A SKELETON | DEPICT AN ICE CAVERN | AND MORE!

We fade to grey

Would you dare to paint without colour? We talk to 10 artists working in **black and white** and **monochrome** colour palettes, and weigh up the merits of greyscale...



Even 50 years after colour photographic film became widely available, many creative photographers still choose to work solely in black and white. Of course, they explain, the classic approach is more creative and pure. Similarly, there are digital artists whose work explores shade and tonal value without all the distraction that too much colour can create.

Certain moods and atmospheres can be conveyed immensely successfully using little or no colour whatsoever. For instance, you can instantly give your artwork an aged, vintage or mysterious feel by working in black and white, or sepia tones. As we discovered when talking to the 10 artists featured here, you can also do all sorts of things to shift the focus on to detail and expression in your imagery, simply by taking away the colour.

Some artists, once they've worked up a composition using a black and white or heavily pared-back palette, then go back in with a flourish of colour – or perhaps some gold leaf rub – to draw attention to a focal point. In other cases, artists add in these embellishments so their work operates on two levels, so to speak.

Dropping colour certainly doesn't diminish the excitement an image can offer, either. The subtlety that working in black and white can bring gives you a chance to engage your audience in new and different ways. And let's face it, a little simplicity goes a long way in a world where media messages are shouted at our eyeballs from the moment we open them in the morning until we finally close them at night...

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Yoann Lossel

How graphite helps add myth and mysticism

LOCATION: France

MEDIA: Graphite, gold leaf, petals

WEB: www.yoannlossel.blogspot.co.uk



What setting could be more perfect for the fantasy artist than living in an ancient forest in the wilds of western France? Only Yoann Lossel doesn't consider himself a fantasy

artist. "I don't like classifications - they make me feel as though I've lost something deeply important in the process," he says.

Fair enough. But this expert in the use of watercolour graphite, who paints in a variety of shades to layer-up his atmospheric images, takes us back into myth and mysticism. The moody graphite work, so subtle in its shading, is juxtaposed with gold leaf to highlight "the sacred parts" of his images.

"I use graphite powder, watercolour graphite, and try to create delicate shades. Graphite is a subtle medium, and I feel like I'm playing with something precious," he says.

His influences include Waterhouse, Mucha, Doré and Dulac, and he has a huge appreciation of painting whether it's Neoclassical, Pre-Raphaelite or Art Nouveau.

1 FATAE

An image from *Eclipse*, a book Yoann Lossel is publishing with Olivier Villoingt in 2016.

2 HYPATIA

Here the composition is heightened by the graphical application of gold leaf.

Artist tip ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

"Graphite has endless possibilities. It can be erased, scratched, expanded with water, and softened with a kneaded eraser. It's the quality of tones, the tiny, subtle shades of grey that make the difference."

Niroot Puttapipat

There's a sense of art through the ages in this artist's exquisite line work

LOCATION: England MEDIA: Sepia ink on toned paper
WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/n-puttapipat>



Originally from Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, Niroot Puttapipat is now a Londoner whose artworks reflect both Eastern and European creative traditions. He's fascinated with the Golden Age illustrators of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as Chinese and Japanese prints, and Turkish and Persian miniatures.

Though he often works in watercolours, it's his inked drawings that really capture the elegance of the bygone age he's inspired by. "Colour is wonderful. But for me, its expressive powers are distinct from the sheer aesthetics

of a well-drawn line. Muted tones unify a piece and act in lieu of colour without fighting with, or distracting from the line work," he says.

His devotion to the line is so strong, says Niroot, that if he were to critique his images he'd want to evoke more emotion and atmosphere. Seeking perfection and beauty, he focuses on the execution but wants to work more spontaneously.

With a focus on book illustration, Niroot covers a broad range of topics: classical literature, children's picture books, natural history, mythology, fairy tales and more. He'd love to illustrate *The Panchatantra*, the collection of Indian animal fables, or Farid Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*.



Artist tip FANTASY REALISM

"If I draw djinns with wings, those wings are drawn from real birds, right down to their colour and structure. Grounding your fantasies in reality is, I firmly believe, key to creating art that is believable."



2



3

1 FAIRY TALES
Silhouette work created in gouache, for BBC Music Magazine.

2 ADRIET
This personal work, drawn in Niroot's moleskin, has a lovely, Tennyson-esque feel to it.

3 BUTTERFLY
A little Eastern mysticism seeped into this illustration, for Kipling's *Just So Stories*.

Travis Louie

Bizarre characters and creatures, with history

LOCATION: US

MEDIA: Acrylic paints

WEB: www.travislouieartworks.com

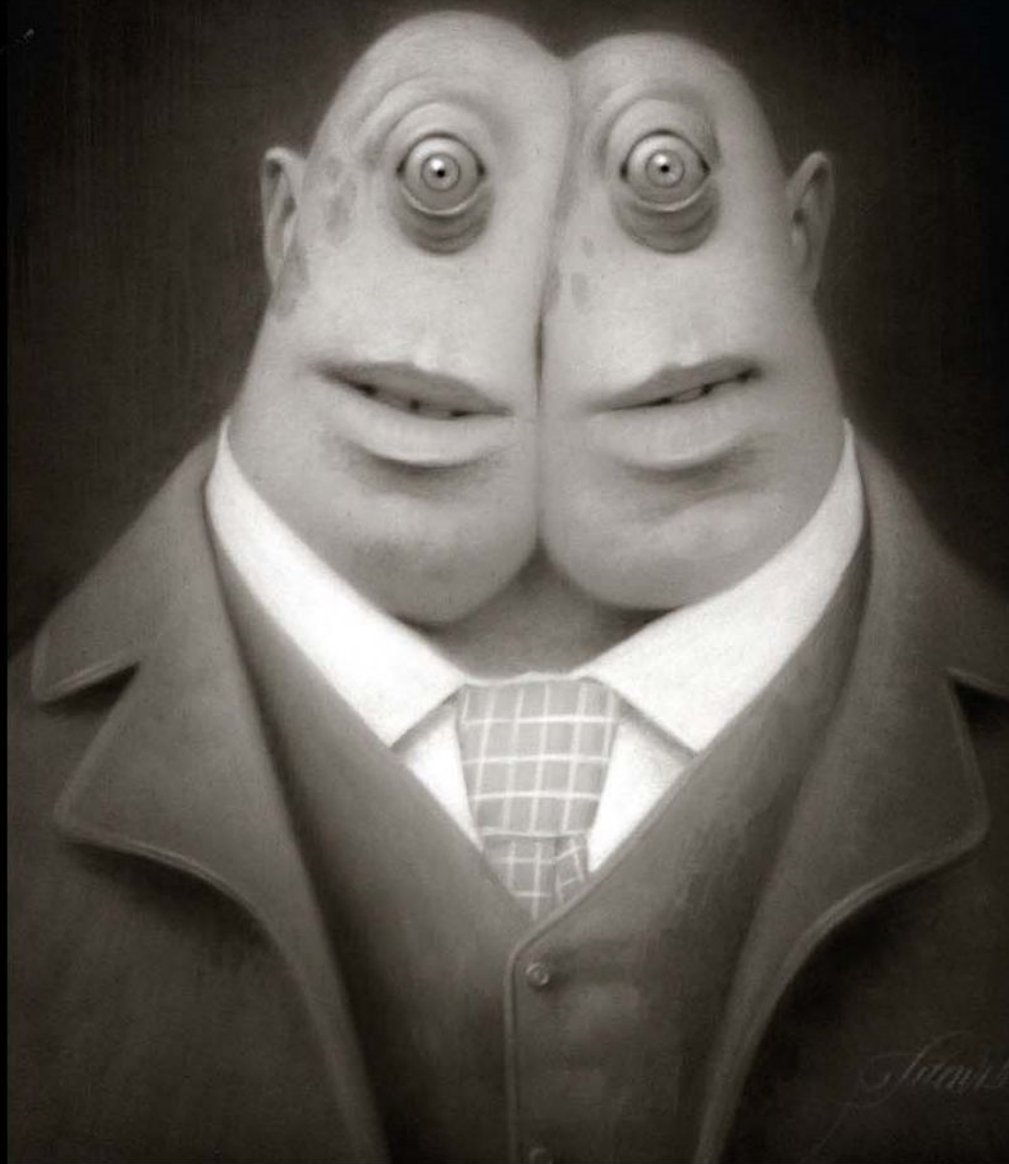


Travis Louie has been an illustrator and a character designer, but has found his niche as a fine artist. He's been exhibiting his fantastical creations since the year 2000.

The creatures he creates are odd, a touch cartoonish and often both mysterious and fun. Travis's fine shading, eye for detail and monochrome palette enhance their otherworldly feel - drawn with harder lines and wacky colours they might lose all their charm. These are strangers in a strange land and he aims to provide a commentary on the immigrant experience in North America.

"My use of black and white or monochromatic tones is a direct connection to newsreels, to cabinet cards, to giving my characters a historic grounding. The world I've created alludes to 19th century ephemera and old photographs you might find in an antique store in the countryside," he says.

Influenced by everything from German Expressionism to Syd Mead and Ralph McQuarrie, Travis aims to up the scale of his works to Renaissance size.



2



3

Artist tip TAKING NOTES

"Be a good 'finisher'. Methodology is important. Keeping a record of your process and write down notes. Learning how the occasional happy accident occurred may come in handy if you can refer back to it down the road."

1 CONJOINED
siamese cyclops.
Yet so friendly.

2 GIANT TARSIER
Even creatures
you've never heard
of can be as loving
as a child.

3 YETI
As exotic pets go,
you can't beat an
abominable snowman.

Socar Myles

Mysterious, menacing and yet charming art – all with blacks and greys

LOCATION: Canada

MEDIA: Pencils, pen and ink, toned paper

WEB: www.gorblimey.com



Sometimes the best idea is to work to your strengths, and that's exactly what Socar Myles does with the artwork on her excellently titled portfolio site Gorblimey. Socar admits

that her colour perception isn't the best – that's why she works in black and white. We think you'll agree that what she might lack in terms of colourful hues, she more than makes up for in charming mysticism.

Her drawings are full of bold lines and powerful contrasts, as well as an enchanted, vintage vibe. Her use of toned paper might leech away a bit of the contrast, but it gives Socar's drawings all the more atmosphere.

"Most of my work falls in the soft horror – creepy, with minimal gore – and wildlife genres," she says. "Both of these have some thematic crossover with fantasy, and I think the decorative patterns and embellishments I use add to that surreal mood. Although most of my work doesn't have faeries, dragons or other fantasy creatures, I think it can still go under that umbrella."

Currently, Socar is selling her work as both full-sized and miniature prints, and her next step is to start doing book covers. Black and white isn't always in demand, but she believes it's more than dramatic enough for an outstanding jacket on the bookshelf.

1 HAND OF GLORY

The severed hand of an executed felon. What more can we say?

2 PIRATES AWAY

The metal band Antiquarian wanted a Golden Age feel, and a high creep factor.

3 DOUCHEBIRDS

It seems gulls aren't Socar's favourite birds.

Artist tip

FIGURE OUT YOUR FIGURES

"Things in the real world don't have lines around them. Thus, it's easier to draw where the highlights and shadows go, instead of trying to convert 3D objects to outlines. Once you figure out how your subject is put together, it's a snap to go back in with lines."





“ Once you figure out how your subject is put together, it's easy to go back in with lines ”

Anna Dittmann

Myth, reality, ethereal motifs...
all from this monochrome artist

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop
WEB: www.annadittmann.com



Reducing your colour palette won't necessarily make your images plain or dull. Anna Dittman started off enjoying bright, saturated colour schemes and was heavily influenced

by Gustav Klimt. But her artwork has developed over the years towards more muted and monochromatic imagery, and she's been attracted to art by the likes of Sam Weber and Eric Fortune, and their more consistent palettes.

"Value is key," she says. "When value hierarchies are strong and clear, colour is secondary. Lately, I'm drawn to works that have colour restraints and more emphasis on atmosphere. Muted hues can often lead to greater balance and provide cohesion throughout a piece. I've found there's a delicate vintage quality that can result in limiting a colour palette."

Anna's artwork is largely portraiture, and there aren't strong fantasy elements in the content of her images. But the pale colour schemes and subtle textures do give her work a fantasy art-style presentation. Inspired by florals, insects, art and emotion, she often starts an image in black and white then shifts into gentle hues.

"I hope my work acts as a window, transporting the viewer to another world. I try to balance reality and myth through ethereal motifs," she says.

1 BAIT
There's a hidden meaning in this one, inspired by carnivorous pitcher plants.

2 ADORNMENT
The intricacy of butterfly patterns provided the inspiration for this piece.

3 BRAMBLE
A man caught in a state of confusion, in an unreal place.



2



3



Artist tip TRADITIONAL EFFECT

"Using textures provides a lovely, traditional effect. It allows for a sense of spontaneity, experimentation and colour cohesion. After collaging my desired texture on to my sketch, I often set the blend mode to Soft Light or Overlay."



1 **GEPPETTO'S WORKSHOP**
One of Ed's most recent paintings, commissioned for the Enchanted Brush exhibition at the Mazza Museum in Findlay, Ohio.

2 **SHREW-HUNTER**
"I got a glimpse of a woodpecker in my yard during winter, and I thought I saw something else too..." says Ed.

Ed Binkley

Ed Binkley's incredible portfolio of sepia artwork is based on medieval folklore

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop
WEB: www.binkley.typepad.com



Nothing gives an image that vintage feel more than an Arthur Rackham-style tea-stained colour palette, or a sepia tint borrowed from early photographic practices. These are things

that appeal massively to Wisconsin artist and art professor Ed Binkley, and they also make his artwork massively appealing.

"My subject matter is generally drawn from medieval folklore and fantasy," says Ed, "and sepia or muted colours tend to evoke an earlier era well. In my art I'm always very concerned about how the light/dark value structure in my images is affecting the mood," he continues, "so I try to keep

the colours fairly tame in order to let that structure dominate."

As well as Rackham, Ed is inspired by Travis Louie and Peter Milton, by old photography and intaglio prints. He loves it when artists mimic that look, just like he does. These days he works entirely digitally. Sometimes, he begins in greyscale and adds colour later, others he begins his underpainting in colour. He enjoys the unpredictable texture this approach throws up.

"I'm really interested in creating more elaborate scenes that tell longer stories," Ed adds. "I'll probably continue with my typical muted palette, but with areas of higher saturation as accents and focal points, possibly as parts of costumes."



2

Artist tip FIGURE DRAWING

"It's extremely important to learn to draw the human figure well, and this takes lots of time and work. Even for fantasy creatures and characters that don't reflect classical human anatomy and proportions, an artist has to know how to draw the figure accurately in order to create distortions believably."

Nicolas Delort

This French artist's brilliant fantasy imagery with a noir sensibility

LOCATION: France

MEDIA: Photoshop and clayboard

WEB: www.nicolasdelort.com



You could say that working with colour makes it a bit too easy to evoke a mood. As Nicolas Delort points out, colder tones make an instant impression on the viewer, sending their

emotions in a particular direction while warmer colours create a different feeling as we receive the message from the picture. With black and white, he says, the viewer has to fill in the blanks. "Maybe you have to tell more with what you're drawing, instead of how you draw it," he explains.

Nicolas continues: "I always try to approach things from a more emotional angle and bring a sense of scale and wonder, for lack of a better word. I prefer building an illustration around which the viewer can imagine a story, rather than depicting the story itself. That means I rarely draw the action itself, but rather what happens before or the aftermath."

The artist works with very physical media when he creates an image. Yes, it begins in Photoshop, but then he transfers the sketch to clayboard - which is like un-inked scratchboard - and inks the areas he wants to scratch out. He scratches away the image with a fine nib.

1 SMAUG

A limited edition print for Mondo, based on the Hobbit film *The Desolation of Smaug*.

2 PATH OF FAITH

Inspired by Brienne of Tarth's storyline in *Game of Thrones*.

3 A WOMAN'S COURAGE

Depicts Eowyn's battle with the Witch King in *The Return of the King*.

Artist tip KEEP LOOKING

"Never stop looking for inspiration in books, films, TV shows, music, other people's artwork... anything. You might think by not looking at other stuff your own art will be less influenced and more original, but in truth you'll end up serving tropes and clichés you've absorbed unwillingly over the years."



2



3



“I prefer building an illustration around which the viewer can imagine a story”

Charlie Bowater

How switching to black and white can help you focus on the important things

LOCATION: England MEDIA: Photoshop
WEB: www.charliebowater.co.uk



Though she has plenty of skill when it comes to creating colourful artworks, this month's cover artist Charlie Bowater has been building up an impressive portfolio of black and

white and monotone artwork. She does use flourishes of colour here and there in some of the pieces, but you can instantly sense that moody atmosphere she's going for with each of them.

For her, working in black and white is a way of calming her natural creative instincts. "It's the simplicity of it," she says. "I'm quite a detail-obsessed individual a lot of the time and simplicity is something I'm still striving for. I can get quite drawn into the nitty gritty details when I'm working in colour, so it's quite refreshing to work in black and white and focus on the bigger picture instead."

She doesn't have a blanket approach when she starts a new piece of art - sometimes it'll begin in colour, other times in black and white. Usually, though, she follows a classic Old Masters technique, blocking in shapes and shades, and cleaning things up and refining them later on.

Some of her inspiration comes from Yoann Lossel, also featured here, and Brad Kunkle.

1 PHOSPHORESCENT
The darker character is like a siren in a floaty scene, and some don't notice the lighter one to the right.

2 FOOLS GOLD
"I wanted a character that draws you into the scene, but perhaps not everything is what it seems."

3 TITHE
Inspired by various fairy books Charlie was reading at the time.



2



3



Artist tip

STYLE UNCONSCIOUS

"Don't worry about finding a style - when I was starting out I was really frustrated by this. Just cast a wide net of inspiration without trying to mimic one individual and you'll find your own groove."



Shaun Beaudry

This artist's dark and detailed occult-ish drawings often begin with gestures

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Pen and ink
WEB: www.shaubaudry.com



Shaun Beaudry is an artist not afraid to talk about his humble beginnings. His family, he explains, faced financial hardship when he was growing up and they moved around a great deal.

They stayed in motels and with relatives, but what gave him stability was a focus on drawing. It gave him the chance to move from Michigan to Georgia to attend the fantastic art college in Savannah.

With influences such as Moebius, Bernie Wrightson, Aubrey Beardsley and Albrecht Dürer, you can see where he's coming from with his darkly detailed ink drawings. "I pull great inspiration from occult and mythological imagery, especially if it has weird or gloomy undertones," he explains.

Shaun's best pieces begin simply with a gesture created in ink or pencil. "Then I'll use several layers of tracing paper while I keep refining the sketch. After the basic line drawing is figured out I finish it using ink with brushes, mapping nibs and technical pens. Occasionally I might work on toned paper or coffee for the drawing, and add white ink highlights," he says.

Shaun says he finds the drawing process, using fine lines and dots, very meditative.

1 WOLF SKULL

Expertly rendered drawing of a raven, with a wolf's skull as the centerpiece.

2 THE BAT

Internal artwork created to go with an album by the band Kylea.

3 RAVEN LADY

Album cover for the band Omfalos, done in pen and ink.



2



3

Artist tip RULE OF THIRDS

"I love using the Rule of Thirds to help form a composition. Simply draw three equal vertical columns, then draw three horizontal ones. Place your focal point on any of the four intersecting corners of the centre square."



“Colours take you away from neutrality. They direct attention and influence focus”

Bastien Lecouffe Deharme

Discover how this French artist adds colour to his work
- but only when it's appropriate to do so

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Pencils and paints WEB: www.deharme.com



Born in Brittany, France, Bastien Lecouffe Deharme now lives in Southern Ohio where he paints and draws both digitally and using traditional media. His work mainly employs limited

colour palettes, however here and there he'll use a splash of bright colour, to lift a focal point and add drama to an image.

His pencil work is where he studies forms and practises drawing. He does it for enjoyment and has been pushing his anatomical studies in the direction of narrative and symbolic systems. He 'cuts' the paper with his 0.5mm mechanical pencil, working fast in straight lines on 300g watercolour paper. It's an instinctive process.

Meanwhile his painting - often cover artwork for book publishers - brings forth the macabre and surreal. "Colours take you away from neutrality," he says. "They can direct the attention of the viewer and influence focus."

"Colour is an essential and processed component of my fully rendered illustrations, even if I use it scarcely. Sometimes I need to get rid of certain components to focus on the anatomy or composition. That's when the use of colour becomes a distraction."

1 THE KNIFE

That moment when the dagger falls from the hands of Fate.

2 THE GLORY PART II

The skull features an ornamental/mechanical monocle, something from Bastien's personal universe called Retrocity.

3 IMPALED

This is a concept sketch created prior to a finished illustration. I enjoy working the simplicity of the lines, the compositions with full or empty spaces.



Artist tip BE UNIQUE

"We could discuss specific techniques endlessly and there's enough material on the internet to learn everything you need. But one thing many students and aspiring artists forget is the importance of being unique."

To see inside Bastien's studio, turn to page 24.

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Issue 124

August 2015

Oscar-nominated Disney animator Aaron Blaise explains animation's 12 principles, In-Ah Roediger tells what it's really like to work in the industry, and six pros reveal how to break in. Plus inspiring tutorials on character design, establishing a mood with colour and much more.



Issue 123

July 2015

Cris Delara paints our pin-up cover star, while a double-sided poster features art from Loopydave and Fiona Stephenson. Julie Dillon and Serge Birault (think octopuses and women in rubber) add their spin, and we learn about intriguing artist and model Zoë Mozert.



Issue 122

June 2015

We zoom into a film special by interviewing two Hollywood conceptual-art heavyweights: Michael Kutsche and George Hull. There's also insightful advice from storyboard artist Jim Cornish, our cover artist Alex Garner and concept designer Ben Mauro.

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January 2015



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Christmas 2014



Issue 115
December 2014



Issue 114
November 2014



Issue 113
October 2014



Issue 112
September 2014

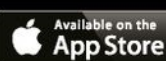


Issue 111
August 2014



Issue 110
July 2014

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION THROUGH THESE OUTLETS:



*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.



FAIRY HERALD This musical figure measures 10x15 inches, and was created from Premier Air-Dry clay, polymer and washi paper. [Close](#)



LITTLE RED AND THE WOLF Forest sculpted this using Premier Air-Dry clay, with the finished model measuring 11x13 inches. [Close](#)



FAUN For the Sea of Trees – a rotated view showing all sides. [Close](#)

FOREST ROGERS

Combining beauty and darkness in equal measure, Forest sculpts entirely from her imagination

The darkness is profoundly important to me,” says Forest Rogers of her magnificent body of work. “This is a universe of lilacs and hagfish. I want both. It brings truth – and good fantasy, as the author Ursula K Le Guin points out, is true.”

US-based Forest is a sculptor of incredible talent. Working mostly with specialist modelling clay, she’s particularly interested in creating “fantastic beings”: nymphs, dryads, witches and more classically inclined figures, all with a delicacy and detail that belies their complex underlying structure. As if that

It was perhaps inevitable that the young Forest would be artistically inclined, as her mother Lou was an accomplished painter herself, who raised Forest alone after the premature death of her artist father. Growing up surrounded by the “towering, mysterious beings” that Lou painted, Forest also grew fascinated with the Lovecraft-esque call of the wild.

“She loved the tales of Arthur Machen, Lovecraft and others of the weird persuasion,” Forest says. “She nursed a girlhood infatuation for Lon Chaney Jr., particularly when he was covered in fur. You can kind of see where I came from...”

“I’m my own megalomaniacal director, actor, playwright and designer all rolled up in one strange bundle!”

weren’t enough, she’s also an accomplished illustrator, and regularly produces anatomically correct dinosaur models for the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.

“I love Rackham, Dulac and other illustrators of the Golden Age,” she explains. “My grandparents had many of those books on a wonderfully dusty bookcase. I sat for hours, exploring. My favourite was Danish illustrator Kay Nielsen’s East of the Sun, West of the Moon: Old Tales from the North. I was transported, though I couldn’t yet read.”

Japan also got hold of her psyche when she was small. “I had a set of wee crepe-paper books, yokai tales, some translated by Lafcadio Hearn. They lived in a special red box,” she enthuses. “When I was maybe four years old, I saw an early Japanese anime called Magic Boy, or Shôen Sarutobi Sasuke. There was a glorious witch who fell into bones and tatters atop a storm-ridden peak. So fine!”

Oddly enough, though, it was only when Forest went on to study stage design and costume design at Carnegie Mellon University that she twigged her true

Artist PROFILE

Forest Rogers

COUNTRY: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Rackham, Dulac, Bosch, Kay Nielsen, various Japanese artists

FAVOURITE MEDIUM: Clay

WEB: www.forestrogers.com



MORRIGAN A WIP photo of Forest’s take on a witch, made from Premier Air-Dry clay, Aves FIXIT Sculpt, wood and washi paper. [Close](#)

VENETIAN HARPY

The faded glory of a mythical creature appealed to Forest

"Harpies get a bad rap, so I wanted to present a graceful, alternative view. They fly the world of myth from ancient Greece through Dante's Inferno to Russian folklore. Venice, which I know only through tales, is a numinous and haunted city in my mind.

Here, I played with one of the things that fascinates me most about working in 3D: a single piece can say different things from different angles. I wanted Harpy to look like she might be a human in carnival costume from the back, a bird from the side, and a 'real' harpy from the front.

She's sculpted in Premier Air-Dry clay from Padico. It's lightweight, strong and buttery smooth to work with. The supporting skeleton is brass rod, aluminium armature wire and foil, reinforced with Aves FIXIT Sculpt, a two-part epoxy clay. Gem-Tac glue from Beacon works wonders helping clay adhere to wire. I used kozo (mulberry) papers on her flight feathers, keeping them strong and slightly flexible. She was a bit of an engineering challenge, but behaved well in general. I wanted just enough colour to imply there might once have been more. I wanted a sense of contemplation and implied history. I was thrilled when she won Gold in Dimensional at Spectrum Fantastic Art Live this year!"

PROUD BEAST At a massive 11 x 22 inches, Forest's sculpture was a deserved Gold winner in this year's Spectrum Fantastic Art competition. [Close](#)



MULTI-DIMENSIONAL Forest designed the harpy so that the creature presents a entirely different view, depending on which angle it's viewed from. [Close](#)



COSPLAY From the back, the animal nature of the sculpture is hidden altogether by the intricately detailed wings. [Close](#)

FOREST ROGERS

calling. "Somewhere in my theatre studies, I realised I really wanted to design the actors themselves, not just their clothes," she says. "I can now be my own megalomaniacal director, actor, playwright and designer all rolled up in one exhilarating, strange bundle!"

"I've come on a long, odd, partly accidental path – no question. There's some advantage in that – you may bring unique mixtures to the table."

Forest's fine art creations begin with a very loose scribble, so it has room to evolve in 3D. She next considers which material would best suit the piece. "My two main clays are Kato Polyclay for small-scale, detailed pieces, and Premier Air-dry clay for larger, looser work." She then creates the armature around which the rest of the sculpture is built. "I think of that as a scribble in space, delineating proportion and sense of motion – the foundation for everything else."

CREATING SURPRISES

Forest then begins adding layers of clay. "I keep rotating the piece, striving for composition that works from all sides. One can create surprises, seen only from certain angles. Throughout the process, I check the piece in a mirror. When the form satisfies, I begin the detail. Detail can't conceal a weak form, so I consider it icing on the cake."

With sculpting complete, she adds colouration and any necessary sealant, using a variety of materials such as acrylics, inks, oils and Genesis Heat Set, a proprietary blend. But the work doesn't



BLUE DRAGON Another interesting take by Forest on a classic fantasy beast, which was created from Kato Polyclay and garnets. [Close](#)

perhaps, but I've directed the attention and focus elsewhere, and it becomes mysterious. I love attempting that!"

So what advice does she have for a 2D artist who's interested in exploring sculpture, but who may be intimidated by all the extra processes involved? "I think of sculpting as drawing in 3D," she says. "There's an infinity of possible compound

Let the materials talk and surprise you. Be ruthless, try stuff and toss it out. Make magnificent mistakes

end when the figure is complete. "Just when you want to go lie down, there's the photography to consider."

As both an illustrator and a sculptor, Forest can see the attractions of both, but admits a weakness for the 3D art. "There's a physical side to sculpture that's cathartic, especially working large," she explains. "I once did a four-foot, full-habit portrait of a quite wonderful nun, in soft Plasticine. Absolutely no insult intended, but there's nothing quite like pounding a 400-pound nun with a mallet. That just doesn't happen in digital."

Some of Forest's pieces seem to float in mid-air entirely of their own accord – like a photo snapped mid-movement – instead of being supported by a complex armature. She likens the art of concealing these practical details to a magician's use of misdirection. "Much more is possible than one might at first think. I've had people ask, 'How on earth is it supported?' It's supported by two sturdy square brass rods,

curves, right there in the space in front of you. Experimentation is the thing. Be ruthless, try stuff and toss it out. Fear not. Disdain nothing. Make magnificent mistakes. Seek out great workshops. Those I took via AnatomyTools.com were incredible: Andrew Cawse, Mike Murnane, Carlos Huante, Jordu Schell."

And what of the opposite step – moving to digital work? "I would love to learn ZBrush, particularly. I need to travel further on the road I've built first – but I find digital fascinating. I admire the wondrous results. One day...!"

In the meantime, she's quite happy to continue her voyage through a sea of beauty and darkness, discovering forms that inhabit her head, somehow translating them into exquisite sculpture. "It's an alchemical alembic for the maker, a voice, and a kind of companionship for the viewer," Forest adds. "Messages in dark bottles, island to island. And hey, one needs a place to put one's madness!"



GOBLIN SPIDER This figure – who has a taste for mice – was nominated for the 2014 Spectrum Fantastic Art Award in Dimensional. [Close](#)



OCTOPOID Continuing Forest's fascination with female/beast hybrids, it seemingly floats in space thanks to some neat sculpting tricks. [Close](#)

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Sketchbook

Darren Yeow

Robots, vampires and beasts with lounge lizard leanings make up just some of Darren's engaging sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

Darren Yeow

COUNTRY: Australia



Singapore-born Darren studied computer science and management at university, but is now a freelance concept

designer who works in Melbourne, Australia, which he shares with his temperamental black cat, Jasper. He is the creator of the Nomad art satchel, but is most famously known for his vehement disdain of pants.

www.stylus-monkey.com

DRAGON 2

"I wanted to practise my knowledge of overhead lighting, specifically on how to make forms pop despite being a fairly flattening lighting style. I think that Daenerys' dragons had also just hatched on Game of Thrones, so dragons were fresh in my mind!"



CAR SKETCH

"I was always a Road Warrior fan, so when they started showing off some of the car designs for Fury Road, I just had to do a quick sketch of one of them. I generally don't have much down-time between client work, so I had to bash this out in an impressionistic way. Totally falls apart when you zoom in, but it captures the essence of the machine."



LONELY ROBOT

"Almost all robot designs I see online tend to be of the ass-whoppin' variety. I try to actively avoid following the crowd, so this little guy ensued. Don't you just want to hug him and tell him that it's okay to have different leg lengths? I do..."



"Don't you just want to hug him and tell him that it's okay to have different leg lengths?"



KAIJU

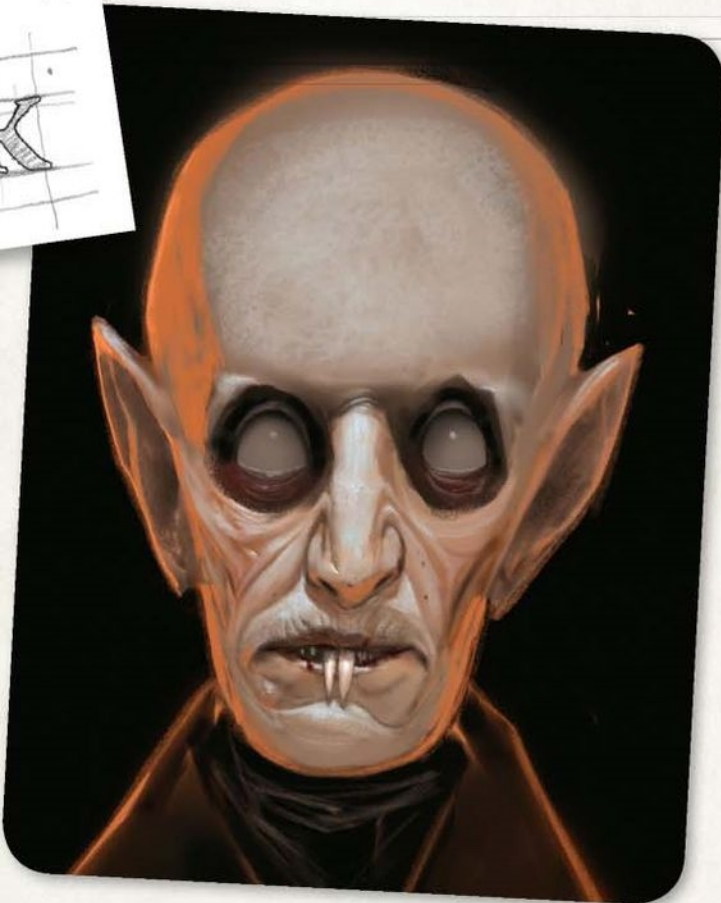
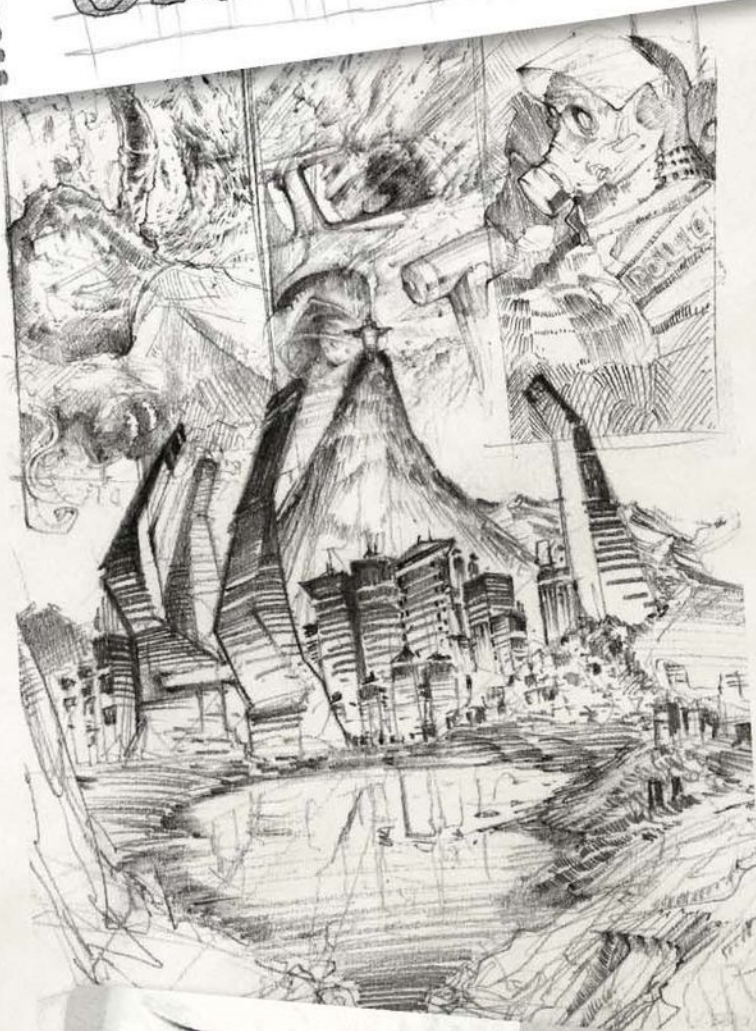
"One of my friends, Allen Williams, worked on the designs for the Kaiju creatures from Pacific Rim and he posted images of his work online, which kicked my inspiration into high gear. I was mainly practising different shapes and form rendering with a dramatic lighting scheme."



ELVIS MONSTER

"This is one of those sketches where I had no preconceived notion of what I wanted to draw. So much of my time is spent executing visions described to the letter, so this is akin to a form of meditation to me. It was looking too much like a regular monster, so my Rockabilly-aesthetic leanings kicked in."

Sketchbook



PAGE

"An old pencil composition of a comic title that never made it to market. It was done fairly quickly with pencil and I still enjoy looking at it - it has a certain energy about it that's often lost when I try to tighten everything up."

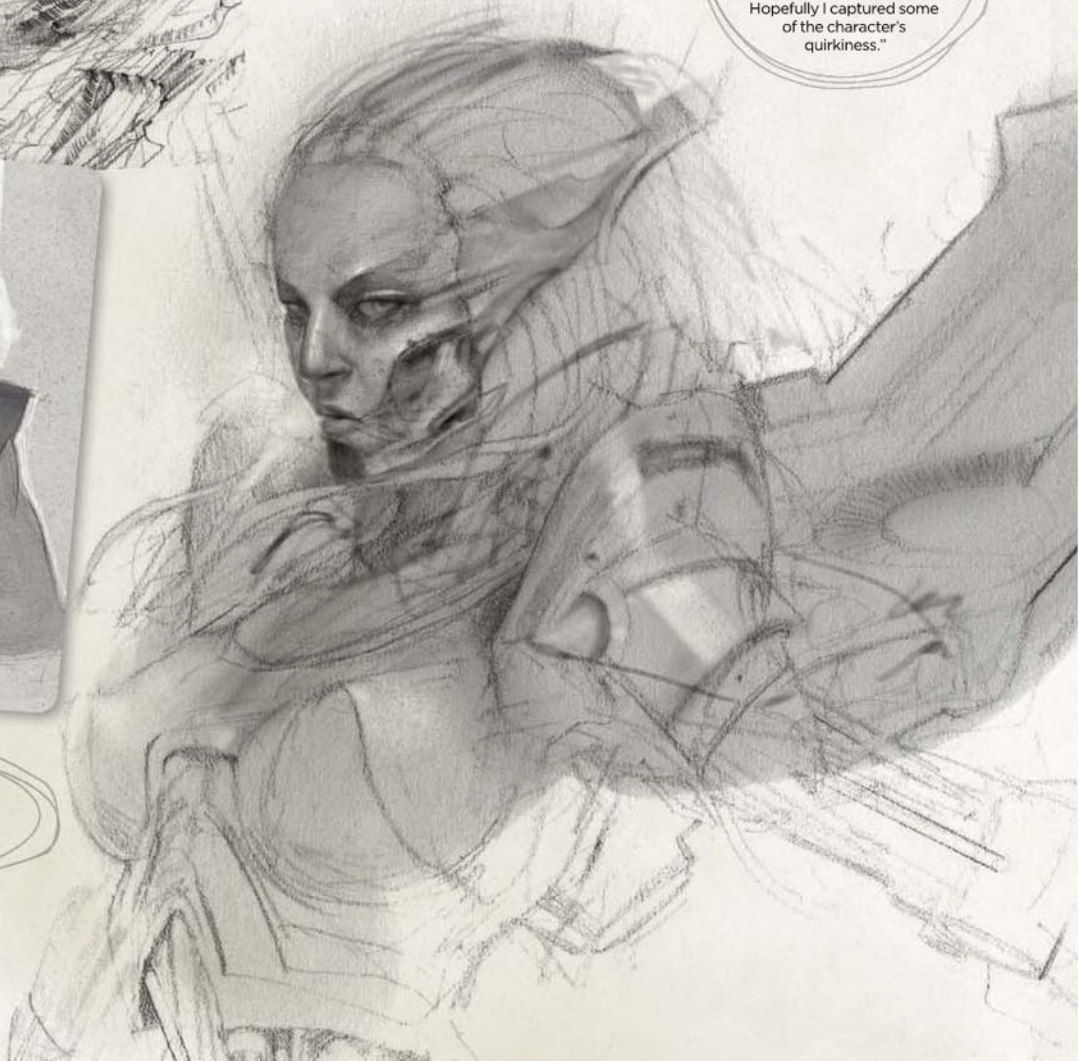
NOSFERATU

"A take on one of my favourite iconic monster men. I loved Max Schreck's method acting portrayal - both the onscreen performance as well as the legendary off-screen preparation. Hopefully I captured some of the character's quirkiness."



PUNK

"Ash Thorp, a buddy of mine, is working on his IP called Lost Boy. Seeing his art and vision for the project was just an adrenalin shot of inspiration, and I just wanted to draw a robo-punk that might be able to live in that world. I've also liked drawing robo-punks since seeing Akira!"





ROBOGIRL

"Alita Battle Angel was the inspiration for this metal girl. I never finished it, but I captured the look I wanted in her face, which was that she could kick butt pretty effectively in battle."

VIPER HEAD

"My friend Emerson and I did an art swap last year - his picture was done in ink and mine in pencil and charcoal. It's another piece which was created with no preconceived notions, just letting the pencil wander and find some pleasing masses to which I applied some details."

"I captured the look I wanted in her face, which was that she could kick butt in battle"

MOUNTAIN SKETCH

"A quick study done in order to practise different colour schemes and minimalist composition. Liberal use of Lasso tool and Chalk brush in this one."



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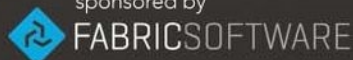
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Advice from the world's best artists

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Give your fantasy characters extra impact by seeing how Charlie Bowater makes the most of limited colours.

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Photoshop THE BEAUTY OF BLACK AND WHITE

Discover how to give your fantasy characters extra impact by following **Charlie Bowater's** process, as she makes the most of limited colours

Artist PROFILE

Charlie Bowater
COUNTRY: England



Charlie's a principal concept artist at Atomhawk by day and a illustrator and doodler of anything and everything else the rest of the time.
<http://ifxm.ag/charlie-b>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Welcome to my third ImagineFX cover and workshop! It feels a little crazy to write that. I was pretty taken aback at being commissioned again, but when the ImagineFX team told me they saw my Fool's Gold image and wanted to create a cover inspired by it, how could I resist?

As you can tell from the cover, this workshop is all about the power of painting in black in white. There's something very raw and highly enjoyable

about foregoing colour and embracing black and white. Admittedly, there's a splash or two of gold in there, but the majority of the painting is monochrome. I'm starting with a fairly open brief to begin with, but gradually we settle on a powerful, winged, illuminated figure.

There's a plethora of inspirations available for black and white art lovers, but I'm particularly inspired by artists such as Brad Kunkle, Yoann Lossel and Rebecca Yanovskaya. All of their art is

gorgeous and each of them has an interesting take on monochrome palettes often complemented by splashes of metallic gold. That colour palette never fails to look gorgeous. I think if you're really inspired by a colour palette, no one owns it and you should always feel free to try out your take on it!

I had lots of fun painting the cover, so I hope that whatever insights I can share in this workshop are helpful, and inspire you to crack out the digital paintbrush!

To see more of Charlie's work turn to **page 46**.



1 Rough sketches

To get things started I'm sketching out a few rough thumbnails. Such thumbnails can be always be rougher than this, but it's my personal preference. I'll include just enough detail to give a good idea of where I'm planning to go with the image – it's easy to get carried away with bringing in details into the scene during this early stage.



2 Working on values

As I work on my sketch I tend to use subtler values to start with, and hover around the dark and light greys. I'm not using solid black or white. I don't want to make the background too dark to work with because I'm still figuring out what I want to do with the image – and I don't want to make the figure too bright and blown out before I've even got started.



PRO SECRETS

Make use of clipping masks

It's probably the most boring tip possible but I can't believe I spent so many years painting digitally without using clipping masks! If you like to keep your layers separate especially, they're a godsend. For instance, having a character that you can light and add textures to without it affecting the rest of your image is such a time saver. Clipping masks, where have you been all my life?



3 Lighting decisions

With the sketch chosen it's time to start building up the form of the character. Things are pretty flat right now, so it's a good time to start working up the light source. While I'm not completely decided on what I want the light source to be (perhaps it could be a lantern?) I do know that I want the character to appear illuminated against the background.



4 Lighting and layers

Over the past year or so I've developed a deep love of clipping masks. They can be a real time saver, and are a great way for me to build up the lighting on the character without it affecting the background, for instance. I've made sure to keep the character on a separate layer, then I'll set my layers above that to Clipping mask: right click>Create Clipping mask.

Shortcuts

Alter brush size

[to decrease,] to increase
brush size (PC & Mac)
My most used shortcut
and the quickest way to
alter your brush size.



5 Appropriate brush types

For much of this painting I'll be using my long-favoured chalk brushes. I like to paint with something that's fairly sharp or has a bit of texture to it; I tend to steer away from airbrushes for painting characters in particular. I feel things end up a little too muddy with airbrushes. However, using a large brush on an Overlay layer above the figure is a good way to add soft lighting.



6 Layer organisation

When it comes to layers, I take the view that the fewer, the better! But it's important to approach each painting individually and with this one, there are separate elements that I'll want to tweak and move around throughout the painting, such as the character, wings and gold sections. It's much easier to keep them on their own layers rather than chopping things up afterwards.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BRUSH1

I get a lot of use out of this soft chalky brush. There's a tiny bit of texture to it without it being harsh.

BRUSH2

The trusty Hard round. Hardly the most exciting brush in the pack, but essential none the less.



7 Light and detail

Things are looking much cleaner now as I add more detail. I'm always drawn to faces whenever I look at characters, so I focus on that area early on. I want the figure to be brightly lit but I still want lighting contrast within her. The lighting will become brighter, but for now I'm adding a stronger light source under her face that will hit her jawline, and catch her nose and eye sockets.



8 The beginnings of gold

Now I add in some of the gold. I'm not 100 per cent decided on what I want to do with the gold at this point, so I'm experimenting until I find something that sticks. I know that I want the gold to weave around the image somehow, and for now I'm just keeping the gold as a flat colour until I've decided. I'll come back and add the texture later.



9 Changing elements

I intended to have the character holding a lantern, but you'll see that the pose of her hands has changed. The lantern is ditched and instead, her hands become the centre of the golden threads and the light source becomes ambiguous. I don't like to change a pose midway through, but I think it's better to address elements that don't work, even if that means repainting areas.



10 Clothing tweaks

The painting is progressing nicely, but the centre of the image is looking a little empty. I want to add more brightness and I decide to go with some floaty, semi-transparent dress sleeves. I find it best to paint these in normal Opacity and then softly erase/reduce the Opacity, which creates the see-through effect. I'm adding in a rim light around the edges to make sure they still stand out, though.



11 Golden textures

Now that I'm happy with the composition of the golden threads I want to give them a more realistic, foiled texture. A mixture of photo texture and hand painting works best. I drop in the texture over the gold (set to Clipping mask) and then knock the Opacity down a little. Then I go in with a small brush and add in cracks and little sections of gold that have flaked away.



12 Wing details

The wings have been fairly blank until this point, but I do want them to have a bit of texture! I'm giving them a dragon-esque texture that becomes more skin-like towards the bottom. I'm using a rough textured brush to add scales and then a softer brush on the smoother areas. I'm also painting in a few veins to make them look a little more transparent.



13 Golden flecks and glow

I want to add a few free floating flecks to add touches of gold around the rest of the image, rather than just the threads. I also want to use those flakes to add some other elements that are glowing, besides the character. I'm painting the flecks opaquely, then adding a soft airbrushed glow above them. A dab of Overlay above helps to make the glow stand out.



14 Last touches and textures

We're in the home stretch now! It's just a case of adding those last little touches to tie everything together, which always takes so much longer than you think it will, funnily enough. I'm adding a little bit of a grungy texture over the top of everything (set to Overlay) to introduce a bit more grit. I'm also adding a few more flakes of gold here and there to finish things off.

PRO SECRETS

Be brave!

If there's an element of your painting that just isn't working, don't be afraid to repaint it! I think it's much better to just go for it and try an alternative, rather than being too precious about your work. It would be nice to get everything perfect straight away but we're human, and it's great to just dive in and fix something if you can see a better way.

Next month in...
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GAME ART

Reimagine a classic video game character!



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Krita Desktop CUSTOMISING BRUSHES IN KRITA



In part three of the series, learn how to customise the software's brushes with **Katarzyna Oleska**, as she explains the basics

The brushes in Krita are categorised according to their specific characteristics. For example, there's Pixel, Chalk, Curve, Particle, Sketch brushes and others. These categories all differ from one another, according to a number of editable variables.

To access the brush settings you need to click an Edit brush settings icon

at the top toolbar (Brushes and Stuff). From a pop-up window you'll then be able to modify the existing brushes or, if you prefer, create new ones on the basis of the existing ones.

You can select and deselect the attributes and assign different actions to each one. Then it's simple enough to save the changes or save the edited brush under a new name.

Artist PROFILE

Katarzyna Oleska
COUNTRY: England

Katarzyna is a self-taught illustrator who works for various

publishers and private customers, specialising in portraits, caricatures, fantasy and sci-fi illustration. She has illustrated a range of leading book titles.

<http://lfxm-ag/kataro>

KRITA BRUSH SETTINGS

Krita's brush settings seem complex at first glance, but soon become familiar. Most artists will work with only a few of the available settings and still create a wide variety of brushes.



A. Brush Categories

Each of the Brush Categories in Krita has a different set of variables (for example, all Pixel Brushes will have different control settings from Deform Brushes). When creating a new brush, you can choose one from the categories and it'll be added to that Category when you're finished.

B. Saving a brush

To save a brush under a new name put the name in the box and click Save to Presets.

C. Brush attributes

Here you choose which attributes will play a role in your new brush and how they'll be controlled. In the case of Pixel Brush they are Brush, Color and Texture controls.

D. Brush Tip selection

When Brush Tip is selected you can choose if you want to use Autobrush or more advanced types of brush tips (Predefined/Custom/Clipboard/Text Brush). With Autobrush you can choose from two drop-down menus: Default/Soft/Gaussian Brush and Square/Circle shape.

E. Brush Tip settings

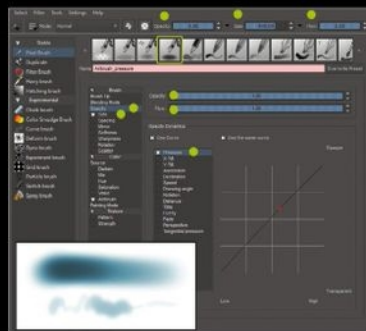
You can choose the default settings of your Brush Tip such as Diameter, Angle and Spacing amongst others. The curve is responsible for the distribution of paint within the Brush Tip shape. Change the shape of the curve to see how it affects the Brush Tip shape (C).

F. Using Scratchpad

While changing the brush settings you can check the results on a Scratchpad. When saving a brush don't forget to put a recognisable shape or brush stroke in the top square window - your new brush icon.

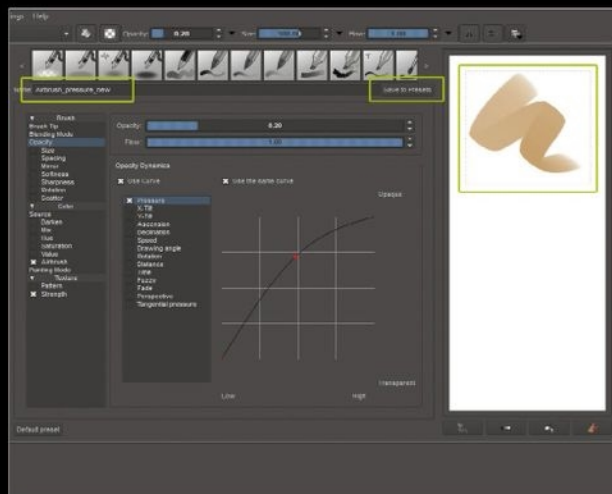
1 Opacity/Size

In Krita you can control Opacity and Flow from the top toolbar. But in order to save these settings as your new brush attributes, you'll need to go on and define them in the Brush Settings window. Opacity and Size are most commonly set to Pressure, but you can still spend some time experimenting with other Opacity dynamics, such as Speed or Rotation for example. See what works best for you.



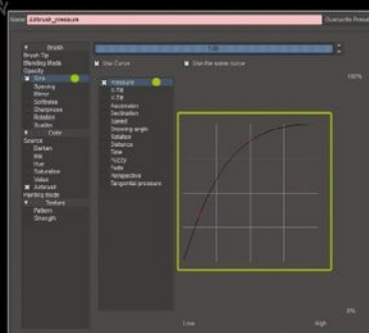
2 Curves

Almost every variable is accompanied by a Curve. This helpful tool will enable you to define how sensitive your pen will become to this particular setting. For example, with Size attribute set to Pressure, a dome-shaped curve will increase the sensitivity of your pen and you'll need to apply less pressure to create a thicker line. This can be pretty useful, depending on your style of work.



3 Saving a new brush

To save an edited brush you can click the Overwrite Preset button, but you'll lose all its previous settings. To avoid that, create a new name, put it in the Name box and click the Save to Presets button. On the Scratchpad to the right you can create a small icon that will be saved with the brush.





Photoshop PAINT A PORTRAIT OF AN ANTI-HERO



Tara Phillips explains her creative process and approach towards storytelling, as she depicts someone from the wrong side of town...

Artist PROFILE
Tara Phillips
COUNTRY: Australia

Tara is a freelance illustrator based in Sydney. She specialises in producing realistic digital paintings that capture a sense of mystery and atmosphere.
www.tara-phillips.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

Anti-heroes are super cool. Be it in a novel, comic book, TV series, or a movie, there's nothing quite like a character who doesn't fit the norm. They're the kind of characters who skew the lines between right and wrong, taking you on a roller coaster ride of conflicting emotions. They're also the kind of characters I'm inspired by the most.

With this workshop, my aim is to translate these ideas into visual

components. Cue roughed up sci-fi protagonist! A man of the law, who's on the edge of his moral compass and seems to have gotten himself into a bit of trouble. Rather than focus on the fight, I want to capture him in a moment of introspection. The story in mind is pretty simple, and your concept can be just the same. It's just about adding subtle details to enhance your narrative.

Starting with my thumbnail, I'll take you through my process. From laying out

concise line work, to shading in greyscale and then moving on to colour. The better you plan your idea, the easier it will be to assemble your artwork. This workshop will feature a range of techniques you can implement in your own process, whether you want to learn about colouring, or easy ways to detail your art. My aim is to deliver a subtle story by using simple tools and techniques to help you on your way.

Now it's time to grab your tablet and start bringing this dark horse to life!



1 Brainstorming the subject

My first step is to brainstorm my idea. This generally involves taking pictures or looking through atmospheric film and TV stills so I can formulate more of a narrative in my head. Lately, I've been on a bit of a sci-fi binge, so I decide to sketch out a rogue cop from the future. I keep my canvas small during this stage, as I can size it up later when I'm refining my concept.



2 Tidying up the line work

With my concept realised and my ideas in place, I'm now ready to get started on the lines. Here's where I size up my canvas and sketch out my refined line work. I plan out the lines as thoroughly as I can during this early stage of the process, so I don't have to make up too many details when I'm rendering. This saves me time in the long run.

Shortcuts

Brush size
[or] (PC & Mac)
Quickly change your brush size while you paint by using the open and close brackets on your keyboard.

PRO SECRETS

Flip your canvas

When you've been working on an artwork for a bit of time and need a fresh perspective, flipping your canvas horizontally is extremely helpful. Back when I predominantly worked traditionally, I often used a pocket mirror for the same purpose. When your work is flipped it's a lot easier to detect imperfections and to even out small bumps in your composition.



3 Take a selective approach

The Pen tool is a precise way for me to make selections of my work. I break my artwork up into sections so I can tackle it in pieces. There are different ways you can organise your selections, but I like to keep mine as vector masks so I have the option of adjusting them later. I organise these in a separate folder so I can easily click and select them when I need to.



4 Lay down flat tones

I'm now ready to lay down my flat tones. I keep this layer underneath my line work and the lines layer at the top of my canvas and set to Multiply. Rather than start immediately with colour, I begin by using different shades of grey. Starting my artwork like this gives me the ability to focus on my lighting and shadows before committing to colour.



5 Apply basic shadows

I set a new layer to Overlay and use the Gradient tool to establish my basic lighting. Once I'm happy with this, I create a new layer and start lightly airbrushing in shadowed areas and highlight brighter areas, such as the nose, mouth and eyes. I build over this a couple of times until I'm happy with the overall look that I'm developing.



6 Adding texture

I use an assortment of textured brushes to add a bit more dimension to my work. Some of my favourite brushes for this are from Kyle T Webster's ULTIMATE MegaPack, which you can buy at <https://gumroad.com/kyletwebster>. I want to play around with gritty brushes so I switch between my layers and keep building texture and tone as I go.



7 It needs an extra something...

So far things are looking good but my anti-hero could use some extra grit. Not to worry! I take my thumbnail sketch and overlay it on top my artwork. Now he's looking much better. It's always great to experiment and even go back to your earlier roughs if they translate better. I mask out any details of my thumbnail that I don't need and am now ready to colour!



8 Build up the colours

Before I start, I merge my black and white layers down to keep things separate. I set a colour layer over the top of my artwork at 50 per cent Opacity. I then lightly colour over my character, working on the head and body separately. From there, I stick to the overlay and normal layers to gradually build up colours.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: ALL-ROUNDER

I use this all the time! This is a great multi-purpose brush to use for up-close details or larger smudgy strokes.

SAMPLED BRUSH 13 5

This is from Danar Worya's free brushpack. It's great for adding texture to your work and painting hair. Get it from <http://ifxm.ag/danar-w>.

STUBBLE BRUSH

My go-to brush for painting stubble! Created as a quick and simple tool to lay down lots of facial hair.



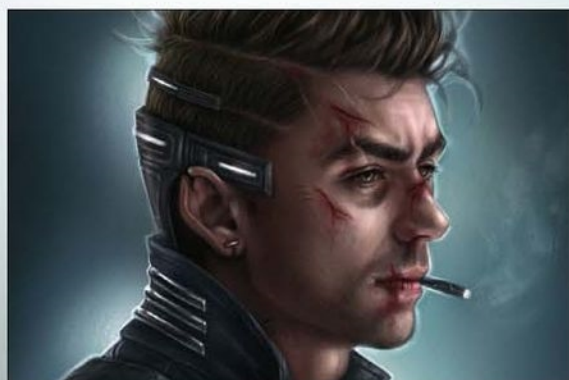
9 Getting into the details

Here's where I zoom into my canvas and get into the small details. It's at this point that I work on the eyelashes, eyebrows, stubble and wounds. I keep these details in a separate layer, and usually stick to a hard, Round brush. For painting the hair, I find that it's best done with a streaky brush.



10 Adjusting my colours

Sometimes the best way to unify all the separately coloured components is through the Curves tool or using Selective Color layers. These can take a bit of fiddling, though. Channeling my sci-fi theme, I start off with some blues and then amp up the brighter tones. I also add in my own noise texture. I copy and paste this into my document and set it to Overlay.



11 Drop in some rim light

Since my anti-hero is lit from behind, it makes perfect sense for me to introduce some rim light. I set a new layer to Screen and paint around the curves of his face and body with white and pale blue colours. For this step, I alternate between my hard Round brush and my Airbrush. I keep this fairly basic, knowing I can revisit this once I finish off the background.



12 Boosting the character's intensity

He's still not rough enough for my liking. I want him to look like he's freshly come out of a fight. So I add some chips to his armour and tear up his clothing a bit. I also add extra blood to his wounds and armour. Then I enhance his rugged appearance by painting in more stubble, some smears of dirt, and mess up his hair.



13 Getting flashy

Here's where I channel my inner JJ Abrams with some lens flares and extra lighting. I don't have a set approach for this one. It's usually just playing around with different areas of the background until I find something that works for me. I generally stick to my Airbrush to simulate depth of field. For some final touches, I add dust particles and motion blurred cigarette smoke.



14 On the home stretch

Here's where I start making some final colour adjustments. I open up a new Curves Adjustment layer and brighten the artwork up a bit. I also merge the layers of my character and convert this into a smart object. Now I can blur my character (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) and mask out areas that I want to keep in focus. He's looking pretty cool so I'm done! ●

PRO SECRETS

Rotate your canvas

When I'm working on my lines, sometimes certain pen movements can feel awkward and result in pretty shaky brushstrokes. To combat this problem I rotate my canvas. Now I can spin around my artwork to a position that's more comfortable for me to lay down precise and confident brushstrokes.

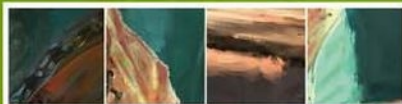
Sketch in 2D, go fast in 3D

Before starting any illustration, I sketch it in 2D either on paper or digitally to find the right composition. In 3D, I only build and sculpt the raw foundations of the image, and I avoid any details that can be solved in 2D. I only need a supporting structure to photobash on top of it.



Control my edges

I see edges in a painting as an intricate network along which the eye can flow. I treat them with care, because they help to transform a CG image into a painting. Pixel-sharp, long edges create a path for the eye to flow along, while blurry or jaggy edges let it jump to the next area of interest.



Photoshop & Keyshot NEW METHODS TO RENDER YOUR ART

Artist PROFILE

Stéphane Richard
COUNTRY: France



Once a full-time musician and software engineer

Stéphane now works as a concept artist and art director.

www.wootha.com

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Stéphane Richard reveals how he adapts the principles of history's camera obscura to his painting process

This image was created for the Titansgrave RPG YouTube channel, as part of the intro sequence at the beginning of each chapter. The client wanted me to illustrate an ancient power that overcomes a wizard who's carelessly mixing science, technology and magic.

The game universe includes design elements that suggest the use of magic in a technological environment. As part of the style guide the art has to look painterly, so

developing a technique to properly turn digital artwork or photobashed images into a painting was critical.

In this workshop, I want to focus on how I use 3D and photobashing to create a camera obscura pass for my 2D paintings. Recent studies show that as early as the 15th century, the Old Masters made use of optical technologies to create stunningly realistic paintings. I always wondered how to approach a studio setup that would enable me to use highly

precise references to achieve that level of realism in my imaginative illustrations. This led to me refining a process that uses 3D and photobashing techniques to create the perfect reference pass for my paintings. By isolating the values, colours and texture creation into separate steps – which becomes my camera obscura pass – I can then use it as a generator to synthesise infinite variations of brushwork and painterly textures using filters, plug-ins and painting by hand.

Contrasting the level of details

Having a 3D/photobashed pass enables me to reduce the details to any level of roughness I want. If I need more details I simply paint them in by hand. I use higher-density details in the areas of focus, and rougher, large brush strokes in 'rest zones' or where I don't want the eye to linger too long.

Accumulative brushwork

Once the camera obscura pass is done, I use it to generate painterly passes to recreate the painting from rough strokes to fine details. I use Photoshop's Mixer brush along with various programs, plug-ins and filters to generate painterly passes, including Photoshop's native filters, ArtRage, Corel Painter, SnapArt and Topaz Simplify.



How I create...

A PAINTING FROM 3D RENDERS



1 Render your scene in any 3D package

Here I'm using Keyshot, but when I need more lighting options I use Maya and Mental Ray. I do three render passes: a matte, a reflection and a fresnel lens pass. This enables me to create an infinite number of materials. If I need to separate out different light sources or models, I'll repeat this for each of them.



2 Build up the image in Photoshop

I use various adjustment layers and textures to develop my desired look, local values and colours. I think in terms of materials, putting each into a separate group and painting them in a mask. This is also where I photobash undefined parts of the image and make it work as a whole.



3 Give the art a painted look

I apply painterly brushwork with the Mixer and Standard brushes, simplify my textures, dial down the level of stylisation, control my edges where appropriate and make sure the level of detail suits the scene. I also use various filters, plug-ins and overlaid textures to bring a painterly look to the CG composite.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
OIL BLENDER

CHALK BLENDER

WET BLENDER

I often use Photoshop's Mixer brush tool to create a brush stroke from the camera obscura pass by sampling and pulling pixels on another layer, with the Sample All Layers box checked. I use the Oil Blender with short strokes; the Chalk Blender to blur edges and simplify textures; and the Wet Blender for long brush work.



Photoshop & SketchUp **PRODUCE CONCEPT ART EFFICIENTLY**

Concept artist **Brian Matyas** shares his process for creating a moody story moment, making the most of his 3D modelling and 2D painting skills



For this workshop I'll break down the design process that I use in my professional work for the film and gaming industries. I'll walk you through my creative process of developing a complex story image in a way that's organised and achievable for all skill sets. My aim is to treat this workshop as a real-world assignment and will offer professional insight into efficiently creating an evocative image for a client.

To dive in, let's first talk about story. Every great image should be firmly rooted

in storytelling. We'll pretend this is an image for a film that hasn't been green-lit for production yet. The film is set in the distant future on an extraterrestrial colony. An elite squadron of fighter pilots guard the planet from its hostile skies. We need to develop a moment in time that depicts our hero confidently bidding the viewer farewell before he flies off into the sunset of a distant solar system.

Even if you're simply producing personal concept art to strengthen your portfolio, always consider the bigger picture that your image can belong to. If

you imply that your images are part of a larger narrative, it will be more visually intriguing to the viewer.

With the story as our foundation, I'll show you how to develop a pipeline that's fast and efficient for getting approval and completion. I'll walk you through setting up strong compositions and colour comps, to painting in Photoshop over a 3D model set up in SketchUp.

By painting in selections, and keeping your layers organised, you'll save yourself time and headaches. Okay, let's put my advice into practice!

Artist PROFILE

Brian Matyas
COUNTRY: US



Brian is a concept designer in the film and game

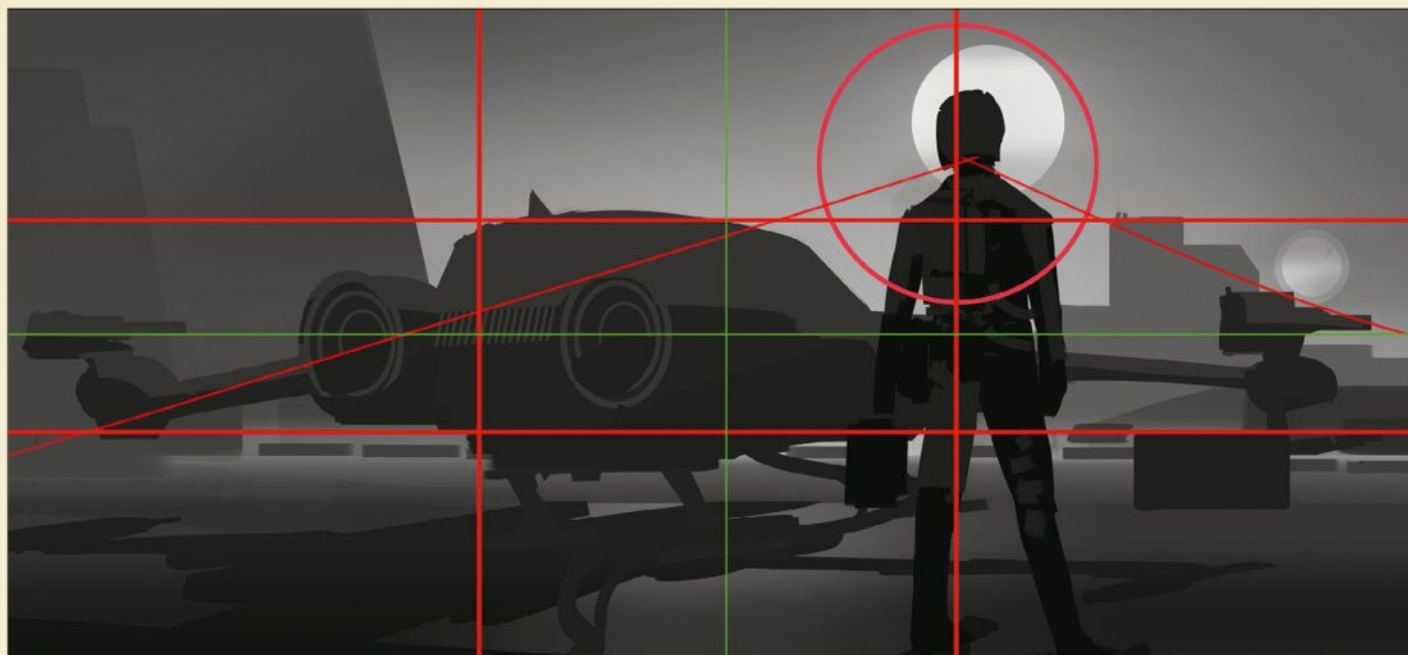
industries. He currently resides in San Francisco, California, and works on a freelance basis.

www.bmaty.com



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1 Compose in silhouette

To distribute the important story elements, I immediately start blocking out shapes in black and white, keeping in mind the rule of thirds. In this case, I want the pilot to be the focal point, so I'll place him on the right third of the composition. Several lines are created off of the starship, to direct you to his head as well as a circle shape to help push contrast and focus.



2 Create a colour palette

I gather reference for the lighting arrangement as well as subject matter, and develop a colour palette to pick from when developing the image. This is a good approach to take when painting directly; it also keeps your colours fresh. I separate the lights and darks into the environment colours and the object colours, to distinguish between ambience and subject palettes.



3 Hit it with colour

Next, I immediately make a Color layer and start painting over the value sketch. I'm only concerned with visual and emotional impact of the image at this point. I use a Levels or exposure layer to really key up the drama with some contrast and colour vibrance.



4 Build up and strengthen your scene

I jump into SketchUp and arrange all the components as per my sketch. I set up a camera and play with focal length to get the drama and space feeling right. I then set up my shadows by time of day and export the components individually on layers to Photoshop.



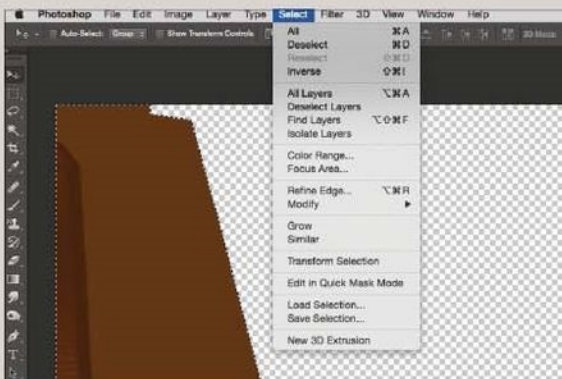
5 Building in a background

I work from back to front in Photoshop, establishing the foundation of the image first. It's important that the general ambience is keyed off of the colour sketch as much as possible. It can always be tweaked later once more components are in place.

PRO SECRETS

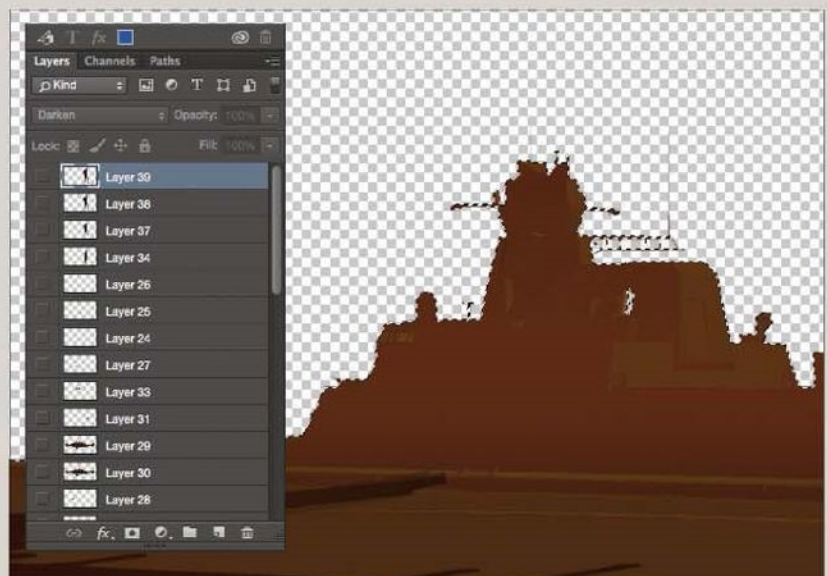
Lighten and Darken layers

I use these Photoshop layer modes to key in my value structure. If you're an artist who likes to incorporate photo texture into an image, this is a great way to get it to blend in and look painterly. You can also get happy accidents when colours start to bleed over the value threshold. Give it a try!



6 Groups and selection layers

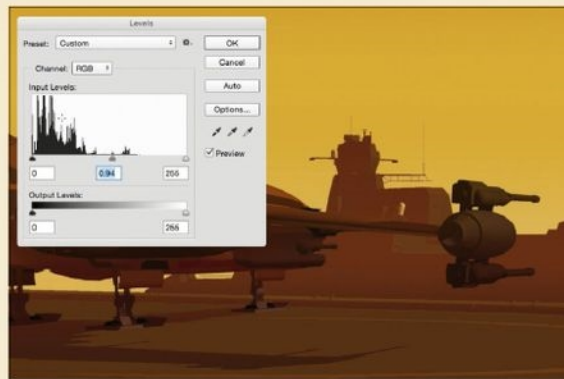
Organisation is crucial when referring back to objects later down the road. Make sure that you save selections in the Select menu, so that they're on hand for you to use again if necessary. This keeps all your objects crisp and cleanly painted in the finished illustration. In addition, keep your layers organised by using named groups in the layers palette to save time.





7 Setting the stage

The starship takes centre stage in my composition, so grounding it in the environment is key at this point. I focus on getting the shadows and lighting on the 3D model to fit the environment. I toggle through a few layers that I exported from SketchUp to paint in the shadows more appropriately using layer masks. I switch between painting in black and white to add and erase out what I want.



8 Colour layer blending modes

Once the shadows are in place, I paint a solid colour on to the starship and toggle through the layer blending modes to get it to fit in the environment. In this case I use a Hard Light layer, which I use quite often. This gives the layer a nice uniform colour glaze over the layer. To control contrast I paint a gradient set on Darken and then adjust the levels.

Shortcuts

Toggle layer styles

Cmd and + or - (Mac)
Ctrl and + or - (PC)
Great for applying a glaze over elements in an image.



9 Developing the ship design

Now that we have a good foundation I start to refine the ship's design. I add elements such as hull doors and landing gear to add realism. Because there's a rasterisation to the ship model, I then erase and paint a clean silhouette, keeping it crisp and graphic.



10 Character pose

A character's pose is key to bring the viewer into the painting. I fall back on the story of this image to help dictate my design decisions. Since the character is a hero about to ride off into the sunset, I turn his head to face the viewer just enough so he still remains mysterious. I also choose a pose that communicates a reserved attitude, which gives him an air of cool.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

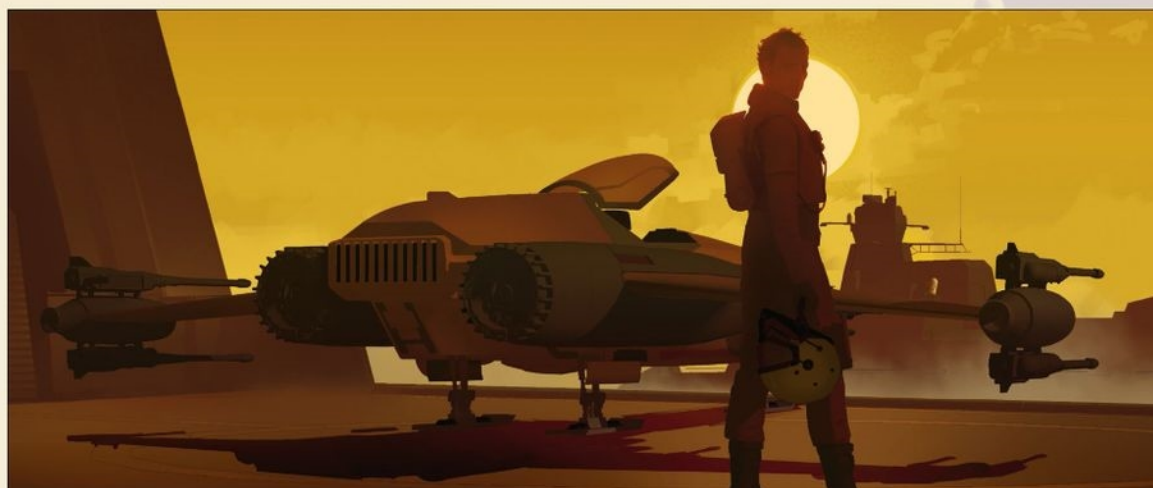
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: CHISTLE MARKER

This is a great block-in brush for depicting clean, crisp shapes.

11 Adding details and making them read out

Clear silhouettes that read easily are still the highest priority when designing details for this particular lighting. Sunsets with the sun in frame create strong silhouettes with subtle form transitions. I'll add those transitions as icing on the cake at the end.



PRO SECRETS

Design with shapes

When designing anything, make sure to focus your attention on simple shapes and silhouettes before getting caught up in the details. Detailing can be important, but not in the development of an iconic design. How do you know if your design is strong? Reduce your image to the size of a thumbnail on your screen. Is it still readable? Does the shape language hold up? If so you have a strong design.

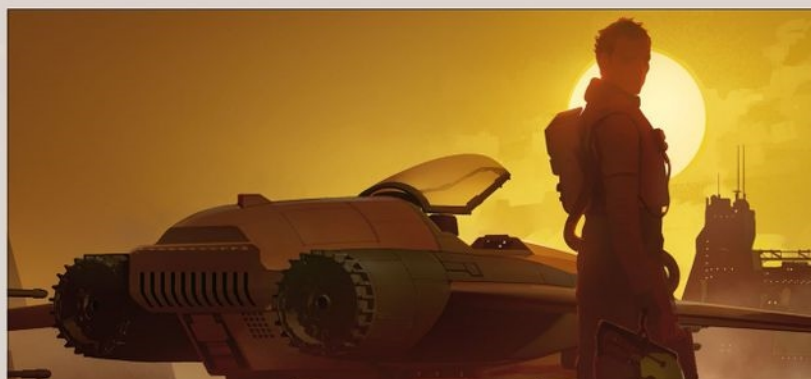
12 Strengthening the scene's lighting and atmosphere

Now I hone in on the lighting and atmosphere. I apply an intensely saturated Lighten layer around the portrait of the character to provide focus for the viewer. I fix the shadows of the character and ship and add some smoke to suggest this is a hot environment.



13 Using the Path tool

I use the Path tool to create a fuel hose. With the Circle Selection tool I fill in a gradient and then draw a curve with the Path tool from the centre. I then set the Stroke path to Smudge and Photoshop automatically fills the line with light and shadow to look like a pipe. I then adjust the values and saturation to fit the environment.



14 Putting in those finishing touches

Lastly I add rim light, hose details and lights in the cockpit as well as on the building in the distance. When I know that I'm reaching the end of a painting, I tend to work messy. I merge layers, use Levels and add film grain to give the scene a cinematic look. And there we have it. Time to send it to the client! 🎨





Photoshop USE PERSPECTIVE TO CREATE DRAMA

Sara Forlenza uses beams of light to help portray a cathedral interior, as she paints a scene from history – Thomas Becket's final moments...

Artist PROFILE

Sara Forlenza
COUNTRY: Italy



Sara is a freelance illustrator living in Italy, working mostly as a cover book artist on digital card and role-playing games.
<http://itxm.ag/s-forlenza>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
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The beauty of digital art is that there are many approaches you can take to painting a scene, especially when it comes to enhancing ambience levels and creating atmosphere. The ease at which you're able to draw perpendicular or parallel lines, just by holding down Shift, makes it possible to create complex perspective scenes relatively easily. This means you can concentrate on developing the feeling of the scene.

There are many 3D programs you can use to create locations, but for an illustrator it's vital to be familiar with the fundamentals of perspective. That said, painting a scene in a cathedral becomes much easier if you apply some tricks. In this workshop I'll share some of mine.

I start by studying the subject. Thomas Becket was the archbishop of Canterbury and lord chancellor, and was murdered in Canterbury cathedral in 1170. This was the medieval period and the Gothic

architecture style was commonplace throughout Europe. In 1174 the cathedral was damaged by fire, and some parts were replaced. For this reason I'll only be using the cathedral as a general reference source for my environment.

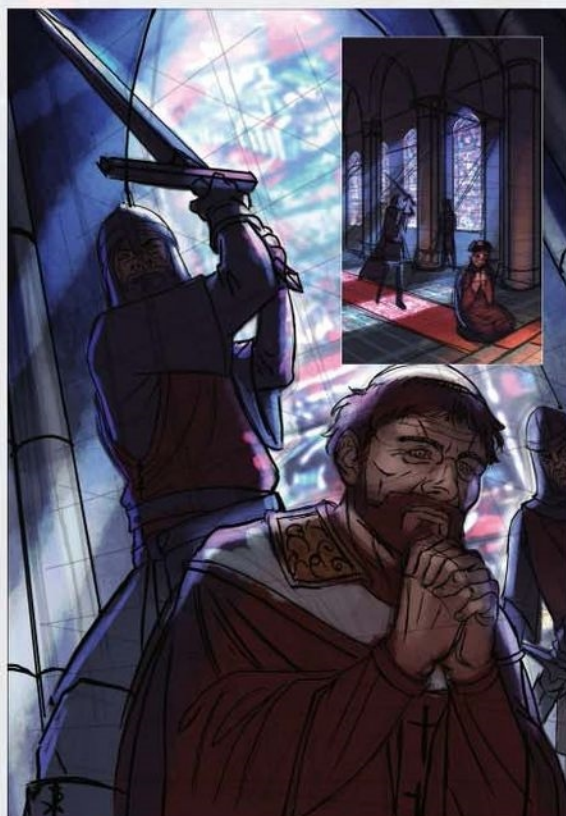
There are a lot of medieval miniature models available that depict the murder of Thomas Becket. I like the idea of using those miniatures as references, posing Thomas in front of the altar as he's about to be attacked from behind.

Shortcuts

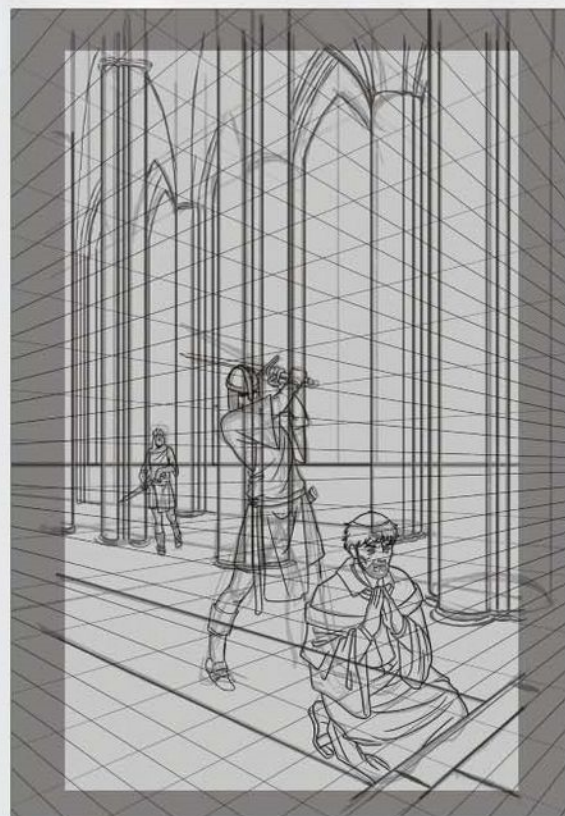
Liquify tool
Cmd+Shift+X (Mac)
Ctrl+Shift+X (PC)
Quickly correct small imperfections with the Liquify tool.

PRO SECRETS

Sketching a thumbnail
Laying down a small sketch with a few touches of colour before starting on the painting itself enables me to think clearly about what kind of image I want to paint, what kind of light and colour combination to use and how to balance the composition of the whole scene. When I've clarified these points, painting the artwork becomes much faster.



1 Exploring different solutions
I sketch a couple of options. The first one focuses on the characters, their poses and their expressions – there's just a hint of the environment. The second one opens up the scene. The characters are smaller in the composition and there's more space to show off the cathedral space. This second approach would enable me to enhance the solemnity of the image.

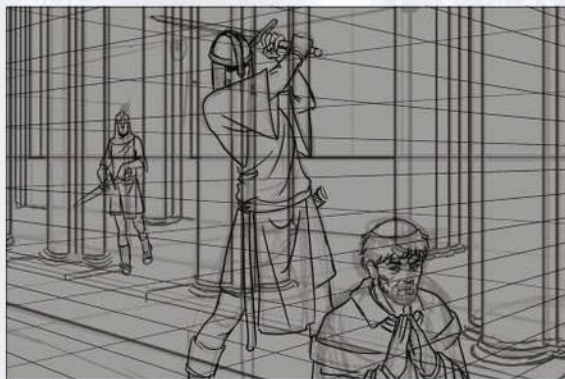


2 Sketching perspective
When I working on a complex environment I usually create a large file and work in the central area. I choose a perspective with two vanishing points, and this means I'll be able to show off the stained glass windows and play with the coloured light they cast. I roughly sketch my characters and architectural elements.

PRO SECRETS

The best view

To choose the most suitable perspective in an illustration we must take account of many factors. In this case I choose a double-vanishing point perspective, which gives the image a natural look, and more importantly it looks less static. It also gives me the chance to show off the stained glass windows and play with the beams of light shining through them.



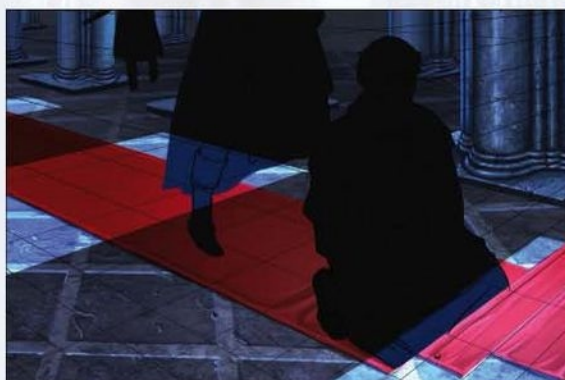
3 Create the line art

The line art step is very important, because it's here that I define the characters and their poses. I try to make them as natural-looking as possible, keeping in mind the wonderful medieval miniatures references. For the background architecture I draw the Gothic features: the distinctive high columns and pointed arches that frame the stained glass windows.



4 Time to colour!

I lay down a blue colour that becomes very dark towards the top of the image. This creates the feeling that the columns continue up beyond the frame edges. Another feature of the Gothic style is the darkness from where the impressive stained-glass lighting emanates. To help the viewer take in the characters, I place a red carpet under their feet.



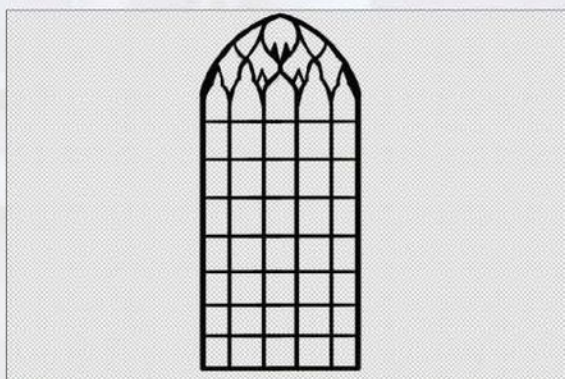
5 Adding texture

I move on to painting the columns and the floor. To make the cathedral more realistic I add a rough texture, cracks and imperfections that give an idea of its stone nature and aged appearance. For now I just paint the characters with a dark flat colour, and then proceed with the background.



6 Main and reflected light

I finish the column's highlighting blocks, which helps me to emphasise the shape. Then, on a new Color Dodge layer, I paint the windows and the light that's cast on the floor with a desaturated light blue. This cold light is dominant in the scene: it illuminates the floor and columns, and creates a reflected ambient light that I give a warmer tone to, for contrast.



7 Constructing the window

Now that I have a rough background, I work on the stained glass. I consult some reference sources and then create a new layer. I choose a Hard paint brush and draw a rectangular structure, topped by a pointed arch. I divide this structure into several other rectangles and add decorations to the top part. Here is my stained glass frame, ready for colouring.



8 Designing stylised figures

Saints and clerics were often depicted in stained glass windows. With the same Hard brush, but at a smaller size, I paint a figure for every vertical sector, based on my reference. I draw the important features of saints: tunics with accentuated folds, halos, and hands posed dramatically. The stained glass window is now ready to be coloured.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BACKGROUND BRUSH

I use this brush mostly for laying down colours in the early stages of my illustrations.

CHAIN MAIL BRUSH

I paint the knights' chain-mail with this brush on a dark flat colour.

PAINTING BRUSH

This is my favourite. I use it to define characters and details.

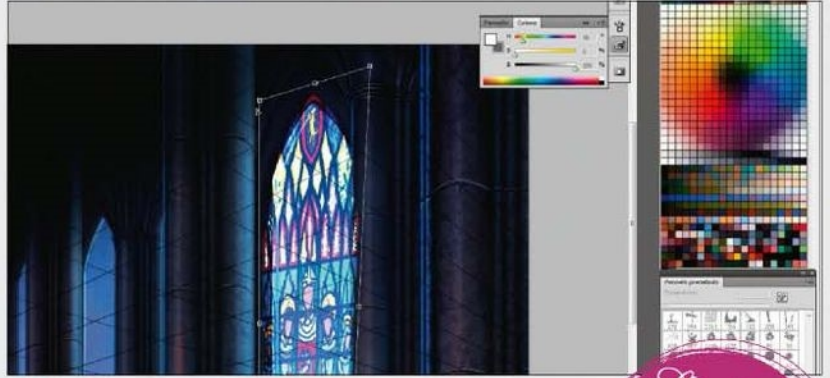
ROUGH BRUSH

I use this brush to add a rough texture to stone and metal, and also for skin and leather.



9 Colouring the glass

I create a new layer, place it under the stained glass frame and began to paint. I choose saturated colours because I know I'll be blurring them later on. At the top of the glass I add simple splashes of colour. I don't need to pay too much attention to those colours because they'll be indistinct in the finished image.



10 Merge colour layers

I merge the colour layer with the black line art and I set it to Color Dodge in the Layers palette. Everything that was black becomes transparent and everything that was colourful becomes bright, but also with a hint of the dominant picture colour. Now it's just a case of editing, transforming, distorting and adapting the frame's shape to my perspective lines.



11 Adjust the Opacity and add blur

I do the same thing for the other stained glass windows and the light that's cast on the floor, always paying attention to perspective lines. If the results are too bright I can soften them in one of two ways: either by darkening the window, or playing with the Opacity and Fill options in the Layers palette. I also apply a Blur filter to the light on the floor.



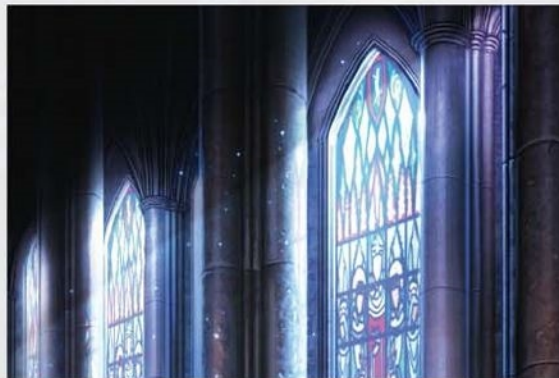
12 Tackle the main character

Now I move on to the characters. I begin with the doomed Thomas Becket. He's mostly in the shadow that's cast by the column, so I paint him with desaturated and darker colours. He's lit by the ambient light, except for the bright beam that's projected on to his knees from one of the windows. To accentuate the brightness of the beam, I add some reflected light under Becket's eyes, and on his nose, hands and tunic.



13 Medieval knight

I give the knight attacking Becket a simple chain-mail tunic and helmet. He's placed in the cast shadow too, so he looks darker except for the light reflected from the floor behind him and the blade of the sword that's in the stained glass light. This makes the knight seem more menacing.



14 Finishing touches

I give a touch of colour to the knight in the background and we're almost done. I add the beams of light coming from the windows and I stress the luminosity with an additional Color Dodge layer. Finally, I paint small dabs of paint in a very light blue, which simulate the effect of dust hit by the light.

PRO SECRETS

A perfect floor

I create a square pattern, taking care to delete the space between tile joints. I lay down the pattern on a new layer of my image. Then I set the layer mode to Overlay and I go in the Edit menu>Transforms>Distort to follow the perspective lines. As a final touch I add a 3D effect to the tile by clicking the layer twice and checking the Bevel and Emboss box in the Layer Style menu.



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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



**7
PRODUCTS
ON TEST**



HARDWARE

92 Iconia Tab 10 A3-A20 tablet

This Android tablet has a decent-size screen for drawing, together with access to all the software and styluses you need to get started...

SOFTWARE

94 Mischief 2.1

Not just an infinite canvas anymore – Mischief reinvents itself to become a brilliant brainstorming tool.

94 Creative Cloud 2015

The latest Photoshop update may be able to erase or add fog to your pics – but what else can it do?

TRAINING

95 Airship Arrival

Much-revered concept artist Syd Mead distills some of the lessons learned over 50 years in the industry, working on films such as Blade Runner, Tron and Star Trek, into a couple of hours of video.

BOOKS

96 New reads

Pinocchio: The Making of the Disney Epic; Terminator Genisys: Resetting the Future; A World of Artist Journal Pages.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Iconia Tab 10 A3-A20

ACERS HIGH This Android tablet has a decent-size screen for drawing, together with access to all the software and styluses you need to get started...

Price £180 **Company** Acer **Web** www.acer.co.uk

Acer's Iconia Tab 10 A3-A20 joins a dizzying array of tablets in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Designed primarily for entertainment, it combines a widescreen display that's ideal for watching videos and crunching Dolby sound with an unfussy design.

The Iconia Tab 10 is running Android 4.4 KitKat, which isn't the newest version of Google's mobile operating system, but can still handle the latest apps. Wisely, Acer hasn't messed about too much with Google's standard interface, which has developed to a point where it's pleasing to use. There are rather more pre-loaded apps than you might want – especially when MobiSystems OfficeSuite, for example, is merely a 90-day trial – but otherwise this is an appealing and reasonably responsive hardware-software combo.

What we really want from a tablet, though, is a tool for spontaneous drawing on the move. Android is much better supported than it used to be in this respect, with big-name apps like Autodesk SketchBook Pro, Wacom Bamboo Paper and Adobe Photoshop Mobile all easily downloadable via the Google Play Store app.

SketchBook Pro or the free Express are instantly familiar to anyone who's used them on an iPad or a desktop computer, with a small puck giving you rapid access to tools and settings while providing an uncluttered screen as you create. We also enjoyed using Artipunk's Character Maker (interestingly, not yet out on iOS), which enables you to draw line art on top of a 3D figure you've posed first.

There's no stylus included in the box, but plenty are available for purchasing separately, including Acer's own



The rear of the tablet features a decent 5MP camera for shooting stills and video.

Accurate Stylus. The brand-new Iconia Tab 8 model offers the enticing prospect of being able to draw on the screen using an ordinary graphite pencil instead of a stylus, something that the older display tech in the Tab 10 doesn't allow. If you're happy enough to draw with your finger, though, it's an enjoyable experience. Some tablets use displays with relatively wide gaps between the touch-sensitive glass and the screen itself, which makes finger-drawing feel oddly disconnected, but there's none of that here.

That's not to say that the display is perfect for drawing and painting, however. Widescreen proportions may be great for watching video, but they cramp your style when you're applying brushstrokes, compared with the more open scale of an iPad. The screen itself is no great shakes, with some low



Use of Dolby stereo technology helps to give any films you watch a bit of oomph.

There are more ports than you'll see on an iPad, including miniHDMI for connecting to a monitor and miniSD for adding up to 32GB of storage.



“Widescreen proportions may be great for watching video, but they cramp your style when applying brushstrokes”

contrast in the blacks apparent – but you wouldn't expect a world-beating display in a £180 tablet. The screen is certainly comparable with similarly priced models, such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 10.1.

The Iconia Tab 10 is a bit of a vanilla tablet, not taking too many chances. Acer hasn't taken the Samsung option of building a new interface on top of Google's: many will say this is a good thing, but it also means that there's little to make this model stand out. Concerns about screen real estate aside, this is a neat little device that will serve you capably as a mobile drawing tool, once you've added apps and a stylus, but it's not a piece of technology that will inspire your devotion.

DETAILS

- Android 4.4.2 KitKat operating system
- MediaTek quad-core 1.3GHz processor
- 10.1-inch display (1,280x800 pixels)
- 1GB memory
- 32GB internal flash storage
- microSD Card slot for extra storage (up to 32GB)
- 2MP front-facing camera
- 5MP rear-facing camera
- Wi-Fi and Bluetooth
- microHDMI and microUSB ports

Rating



The screen is bright, but its widescreen ratio is quite restrictive for drawing.

IN FOCUS

ONLY ON ANDROID

Creative apps that iPad owners can't get, but Iconia owners can!



ArtFlow

Web www.artflowstudio.com

Price Free, plus in-app purchase

This app does it all, with over 50 brushes for painting and sketching. Features include no limit on the amount of undos you can have, and integration with Samsung's Pen.Up community.



Character Maker

Web www.artipunk.com

Price £2.90

If you find figure drawing tough or need to nail a tricky pose, Character Maker's mannequin enables you to pose a figure, then choose a pen and draw over the top in your own style.



Painter Mobile

Web www.corel.com

Price Free, plus in-app purchase

One of the most famous digital painting programs doesn't have an iPad edition – but you can get Corel Painter on Android. Natural media brushes and layers will make you feel at home.

Mischief's infinite canvas enables you to constantly generate ideas, because you'll never run out of space!



Mischief 2.1

CREATING MISCHIEF Not just an infinite canvas – Mischief has become a brilliant brainstorming tool

Price £17 (or free, without Pins) **Company** The Foundry **Web** www.madewithmischief.com

Until now, Mischief's main selling point was its infinite zoom canvas. It's a canvas with no predetermined size or border you can zoom in or out of to your heart's content, thanks to its vector-based drawing engine.

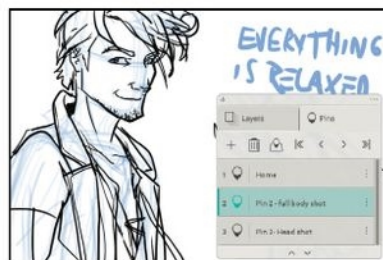
It works very well. Mischief feels more like natural/raster drawing than using vectors. But you can't help but feel it's a bit gimmicky. Mischief was never going to compete with apps like Photoshop or Painter. Fortunately, Mischief doesn't have to. It's reinventing itself as an essential tool for brainstorming and ideation.

The big addition to Mischief 2.1 is Pins. Pins adds a new way of taking advantage of the infinite canvas. You can add a Pin to any point on your canvas, enabling you to quickly navigate back to it later. You can manage and reorder up to 99 Pins, so you're free to continue drawing or writing ideas without worrying about organising your thoughts.

Mischief 2.1 features a streamlined interface with six basic brushes that include mild customisation options, but no textures. Mischief's appeal is getting started immediately and not getting bogged down with options.

You start on a transparent layer, so you're ready to get sketching straight away. Mischief supports multiple layer options and opacity. Its ability to infinitely zoom, and line smoothing options, make it a good choice for inking artworks. But it lacks lasso tools, so painting with selections isn't possible here. The best way to use Mischief is at the start of your workflow. Sketch ideas out, ink them and then export your visible canvas (with your choice of pixel dimensions/document size/resolution) as JPEG, PNG or PSD into Photoshop to paint.

Mischief 2.1 is a superb choice for all creatives. It gets you generating ideas quickly and efficiently and has them looking great even before taking them into Photoshop.



Easily navigate back to areas of your canvas by assigning 'Pins' to them and using the Pins panel.

DETAILS

Features

- Pins lets you save and quickly navigate to parts of your canvas
- Manage and reorder up to 99 Pins
- Export sequences of Pins as thumbnails
- Infinite canvas
- Feels like pixel-based brushes and has scalability of vectors
- Easy to use
- Export your viewable canvas to JPGs, PSDs and PNGs, choosing dimensions and resolution
- Infinite zoom: range of 50 trillion to one
- Make Mischief translucent to use, like tracing paper
- New, streamlined interface

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7 or later, 2GB RAM, 100MB hard disk space, 1,024x720 display, OpenGL 2.0 or greater
Mac: OS X 10.8 or later, 2GB RAM, 100MB hard disk space, minimum 1,024x720 display, OpenGL 2.0 or greater

Rating



Dehaze is essential for photos taken in the perpetual cloud lurking over the UK.



Creative Cloud 2015

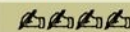
CLEAR SKIES Remove fog in the Photoshop update – but what else?

Price From £8.57

to £69.72/month

Company Adobe

Web www.creative.adobe.com



Adobe delivered an arrow to the knee with the release of its subscription-only Creative Cloud back in 2013, but the wounds have almost healed. Now the company has added a few new features.

New to Photoshop are Artboards – templates for specific devices such as your iPad or desktop. They can clone your work across multiple devices and get an idea of how it'll look. Not essential, but nifty.

More useful is a dehaze/haze feature, which removes fog, smog and underwater murkiness. It won't magic in the San Fran skyline from a cameraphone shot on a cloudy day, but inverting it adds mysterious mistiness to background layers.

Photoshop Mix, Brush CC, Shape CC and Color CC have been available on iOS devices for a while, but now they finally arrive on Android. Time-consuming tasks, such as cut-outs or custom brushes, can now be performed anywhere. Adobe's also added a Stock gallery with millions of Getty-challenging images at competitive one-off or subscription rates. They're both great additions that make up for the paucity of core new features.



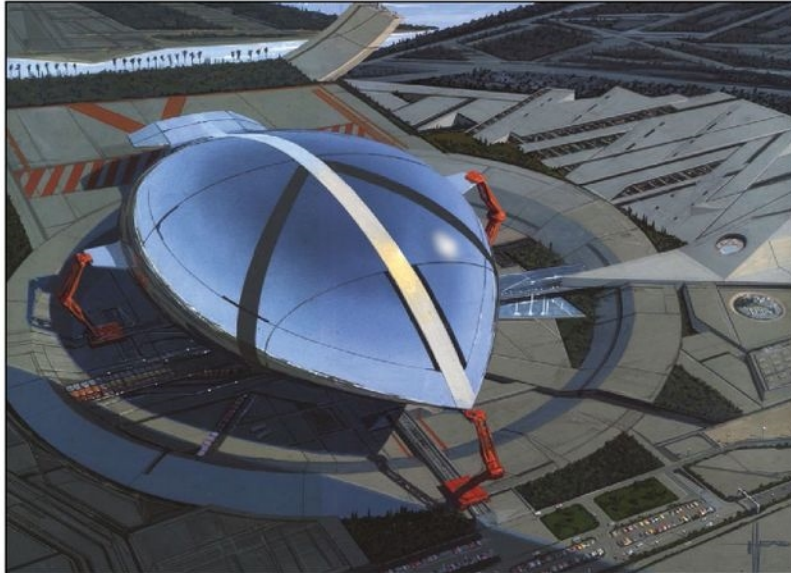
Artboards are aimed at designers, but artists can customise them for canvas sizes and ratios.

Syd uses a single flat-tipped brush to block out, switching between broad strokes and accurate dabs to do the job fast.

The making of Syd Mead's Airship Arrival painting is a masterclass in giving just the right amount of visual information.



You'll see how easy it is to suggest details like woodland or parked cars with relatively few brushstrokes.



Airship Arrival

EL SYD Revered Hollywood concept artist Syd Mead distills some of the lessons learned over 50 years into a couple of hours



Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** \$69 **Format** Download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Even Syd Mead can't believe how long he's been doing the job he loves, laughing in disbelief in his intro to this video when he mentions his five-decade track record. The humility of a designer famed for his work on the likes of *Blade Runner* underpins the video. He never takes the easy option of trotting out Hollywood anecdotes: these two hours are solid art training.

Showing the creation of a large-scale piece of concept art, *Airship Arrival* is a masterclass in deploying just the right amount of detail to convey the information the viewer needs. Syd relies here on a long-standing physical workflow based around hand-mixed gouache paints, but most of the tricks and techniques revealed are easily transferable to digital.

Syd isn't concerned with arguments over physical or digital: "I admire very much what's being done in the electronic field," he says, "but you still have to learn how to make a picture."

Artists who enjoy traditional methods will find plenty of inspiration, as Syd shows how quickly and accurately you can block out a large area with a single flat brush, or casually draws in a consistent sweeping curve with the help of a straight ruler.

Detailing is at the heart of this workshop, however. Everything from palm trees to parking lots are created with the utmost economy, lending scale to the central, semi-abstract future dirigible. You'll see how few brushstrokes it takes to suggest a car with shadows and highlights.

If there's a criticism of the video, it's the camera work, which switches between close-up work and cut-scenes of Syd mixing colour, but too rarely steps back to give you the chance to see the effect Syd's choices make to the bigger picture.

At \$69 for two hours, this isn't a cheap download, but there's a rich seam of knowledge here that you can mine for your own work.

DETAILS

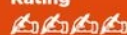
Topics covered

- Brush types
- Sketching
- Varying the design
- Blocking out
- Background details
- Foreground shadows

Length

140 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE SYD MEAD

Syd began his professional career over 50 years ago, creating characters and backgrounds for animated cinema intermission trailers. He moved into industrial design at Ford's Advanced Styling Studio, where he began to be recognised for his futuristic style. In 1970 Syd started creating industrial design and corporate graphics and, after moving to California in 1975, concept designs for film, TV and games. His first cinema work was



the V'Ger entity for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, followed by two cult classics: *Blade Runner* and *TRON*.

www.sydmead.com



Pinocchio: The Making of the Disney Epic

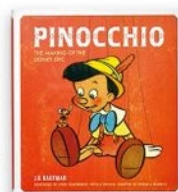


NO STRINGS ATTACHED One of Disney's most overlooked classics, lauded by critics, gets the appraisal it deserves

Author JB Kaufman **Publisher** The Walt Disney Family Foundation **Price** £35 **Web** www.pinocchioDisneyepic.com **Available** Now

JB Kaufman has already documented the creation of *Snow White*, and this investigation into Uncle Walt's critically lauded but less successful follow-up suggests that the Disney publishers are planning on a book as weighty as this for every feature length animation they've made. In fairness, all Disney movies have stories worth telling, but *Pinocchio* more than most.

As we recommend the book thoroughly, it would be counter-



Seventy five years after the film's release, readers finally get an insight into the genesis of Pinocchio.

productive to summarise the story of the film's creation – JB covers the entire production with just the right volume of authoritative detail anchoring a compelling narrative.

However, if there's just one slightly lacking element in the text, it's that a few more pages could have been devoted to Collodi's original book, and the (surely rights-free) illustrations the Disney team referred to. For such a definitive guide, a slight hike in the number of images used would have been welcome.

Nonetheless, lovers of Disney's Golden period of exquisitely painted backdrops and revolutionary character animation will be more than sated by the artwork reproduced here. The paintings from legendary Swedish illustrator Gustaf Tenggren – key to Walt Disney's designs for his first few features – justify a purchase on their own, and belong in a faithful edition of the original book.

Often, where the narrative seems to tease details that aren't illustrated, such as the development of Jiminy Cricket from ugly bug to cute icon, your faith is replenished by the more thematic approach taken mid-production, where every character is

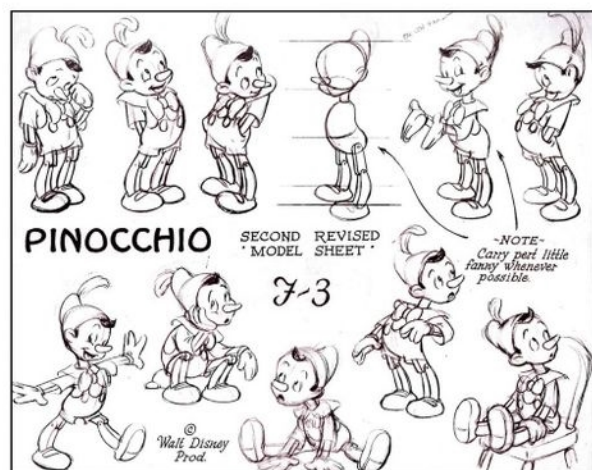


The young puppet learns a valuable lesson in humility from the wise Blue Fairy.

shown on their journey from rough design to finished icon.

The Disney company has recycled, rebooted and reimagined its properties so many times, a truly exhaustive guide to everything Pinocchio-related would be impossible to squeeze in, but a fair stab is made at showing the film's marketing and spin-offs up to 20 years after release, and finally an extra essay by animation professor Russell Merritt only confirms what JB has expressed in the previous 300 pages: that animators all over the world remain indebted to Walt, his artists, and their naughty little Italian puppet-boy.

RATING



Terminator Genisys: Resetting the Future

FUTURE IMPERFECT The machines have risen yet again, giving you another chance to view art and imagery from the Terminator sandbox

Author David S Cohen **Publisher** Insight Editions **Price** £30 **Web** www.insighteditions.com **Available** Now

The rights to all forms of the unstoppable killer robot franchise have been bought up by brother and sister duo David Ellison and Dana Goldberg, AKA Skydance Productions, making this behind-the-scenes book their story.

Judged solely as an art book, we can't recommend this – but then, besides the unmistakable Arnie factor, the Terminator franchise has never really stood out visually from the multitude of other post-apocalyptic



Concept art depicting Spider Tanks hunting down humans in the ruins of post-Judgment Day America.



sci-fi franchises in cinema and gaming. Turning these pages, you're greeted by brushed metal grey and dark blue layout, with designs for killing machinery and futuristic mech suits that could have come straight out of most generic shooters.

With storyboards and rough sketches used more as decoration to the text than standalone facsimiles to study, this is not an in-depth book by

any stretch of the imagination. Yet the narrative skips along, and digital artists will be diverted by the investigation into how the effects team pitted the real Schwarzenegger against his younger self, among a host of complex set pieces. Still, a more holistic guide to the franchise would be money better spent than this Making of... book.

RATING

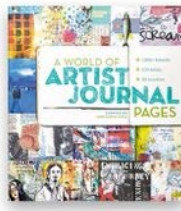
A World of Artist Journal Pages

OVER THE SHOULDER A second instalment of intimate snoops into the sketchbooks of artists from every corner of the globe...

Editor Dawn Sokol **Publisher** Stewart, Tabori & Chang **Price** £16 **Web** www.abramsbooks.com **Available** Now

The follow-up to the warmly received 1000 Artist Journal Pages certainly inflames the imagination. The contents are far too wide-ranging, esoteric and personal to each individual artist to be in any way categorised together, except in this constantly surprising, loosely collected form.

Some may complain that Dawn Sokol has only included a handful of male artists out of the book's 230, but as that ratio has always traditionally



Micki Wilde's bizarre-looking creature is just one example of the eclectic art on display in this book.



been reversed, we note it only as a feature, not a criticism.

The quality vastly changes, from felt pen cartoons to glorious watercolour scenes. But wherever on the spectrum the art lands, every turn of the page has something to provide pause for thought. Each entry makes you wonder: what if you just found this squib, or sketch, or collage, on the bus? What kind of life does the artist who

forged the collage depicting a sleeping were-bear with the motto 'It's better now' lead? What inspired one scribbler to portray St. Bartholomew advertising ice cream? A few motivations can be gleaned from the editor's selected interviews with artists, but many instances of 'found art' are best pored over in wide-eyed ignorance.

RATING



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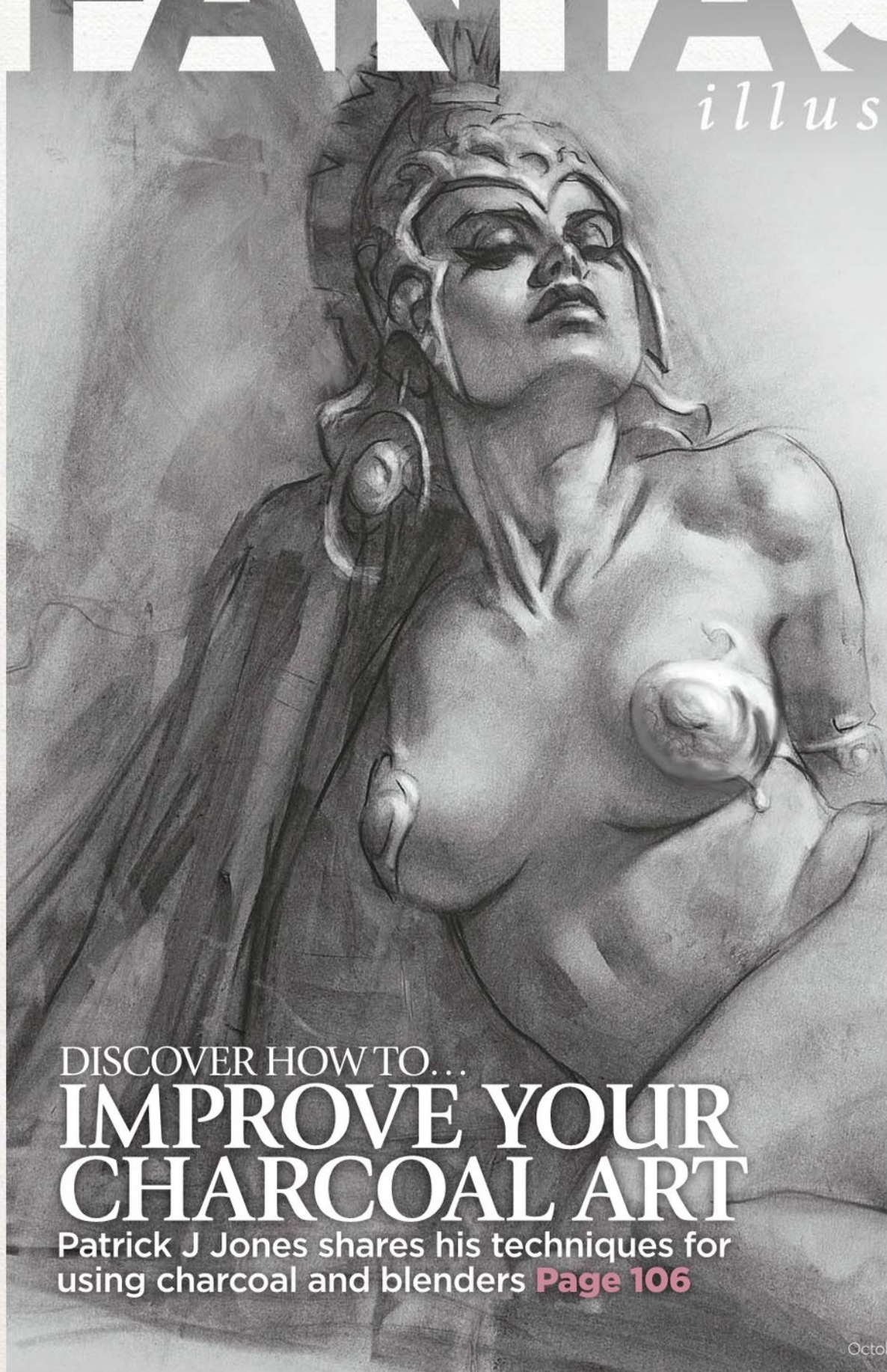


NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
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PRESENTS



FANTASY

illustrator



DISCOVER HOW TO...
**IMPROVE YOUR
CHARCOAL ART**

Patrick J Jones shares his techniques for
using charcoal and blenders **Page 106**

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The best traditional art revealed.



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We visit Chicago's FIW.



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114 First impressions
Marc Gabbana talks comics.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Jessica Shirley

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jessicashirleyart.com

EMAIL: jessica.m.shirley@gmail.com

MEDIA: Acrylic, oils



Jessica studied illustration at Brigham Young University and more recently at SmArt School.

"I've always been fascinated by the strangeness of myths and fairy tales," she says, "so I love making moments you can't exactly find in ordinary life. I'm attracted to the melancholy, the romantic, the strange, and the beautiful, which hopefully comes through in my work."

She tries to make the underdrawing beautiful and let it carry through in the finished piece. "I also love shape making, adding graphic elements and incorporating flow. I'm forever compelled to pull out images from my mind, trying to distill them on to paper."



1 ROBYN HODE

Acrylic on panel, 16x24in

"This gender-swapped Robin Hood was just pleading for the bright pink thistle overlay. I wanted her to look fierce and graceful. I hope to find more opportunities to include unusual elements in my art."

2 IN THE WORLD

Acrylic on panel, 11x17in

"This painting is about the vulnerability of youth. It's something that I think about as my children grow up and become more independent."

3 SHADE OF NIGHT

Acrylic on panel, 11x17in

"For this piece, the angel is haunting and beautiful, but I also wanted her nature to be ambiguous. Is she good? Is she bad? What will she do to this guy?"

4 THE GOLDEN BIRD

Acrylic on panel, 8x12in

"This one is based on the Grimm fairy tale, The Golden Bird. I wanted to showcase the moment when the hero ignores advice and as a result, has to make a run for it while the magical bird calls out an alarm."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"There's something unmistakably touching about the melancholy of teenage years running through Jessica's sentimental art. It almost makes me want to go out and get my ear pierced."

Clifford Hope,
Operations Editor

Christine Griffin

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.quickreaver.com

EMAIL: alizarin_griffin@yahoo.com

MEDIA: Conté crayons, charcoal, graphite, inks, oils



Christine's inspirations lie in beauty gone askew, the devil in the details and the human animal. "Working in a variety of media has been tricky and rewarding," she says. "With digital, there isn't a colour you can't pick, a change you can't make. Nothing beats delivery to a client by simply hitting Send."

"On the other hand, there's something so satisfying about working with traditional media. The grit of pencil on paper, the smell of solvents, that hallowed original, which is almost impossible to create digitally. Traditional art is deliciously tangible."

For this artist, painting has to fit around the roles of mother and wife: "Squeezing in time to make art has been a slippery balance between chores, chauffeuring and an easily distracted muse," she says.



1 EVE

Charcoal, ink, gold and yellow acrylic paint on paper, 11x14in

"Playing with iconography, Eve was simply cool imagery combined. This piece took forever because of all the blending I had to do. Soft brushes did the trick, though, which managed to soften the pencil strokes without smudging them into mush."

2 PUSS 'N' BONES

Ink and acrylic on paper, 5x7in

"This was just a fun little doodle, for which one of my cats modelled. Even though she's a tabby. Who says cats can't cosplay?"

3 TEARS IN HEAVEN

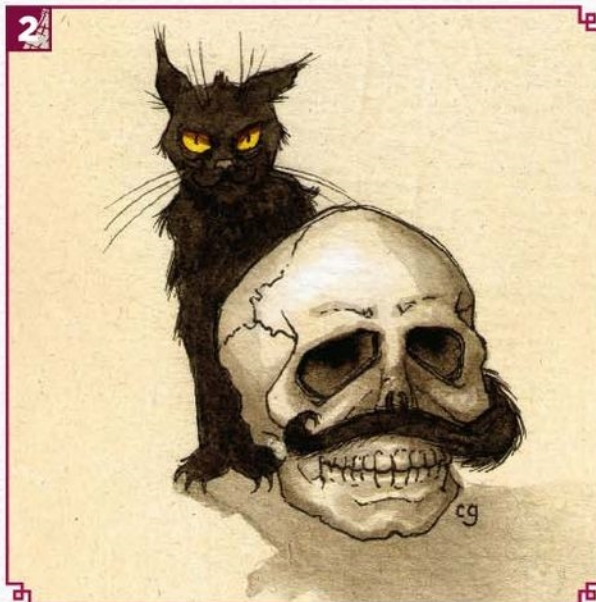
Watercolours and ink on paper, 8x10in

"Watercolour and ink have a wonderful, spontaneous quality that can go either very poorly or very cool, very quickly. I worked with a wet-on-wet technique, to get the colours to float within the shapes. And crossed my fingers for cool."

4 BEAUTIFUL GRIM

Oil on canvas, 12x16in

"This piece was painted as a fundraiser for a breast cancer survivor. (Yay, survivor!) I was going for a slightly macabre, slightly surreal spin, because that's what disease feels like to me. Also, purple and orange is a strange combination, and it was an interesting challenge to play with those colours."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I'm definitely drawn to the paradox of beauty and darkness in Christine's art. My favourite though is Puss 'n' Bones. The fiercely protective cat and inadvertent moustache, add real comedy."

Daniel Vincent
Art Editor



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FIGURATIVE ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOP

Putting figure models in costume offers artists something different to draw – and for their portfolio – says **AARON MILLER**

Back in 2008, Figurative Illustration Workshop's (FIW) founder, Aaron Miller, started life drawing at a local studio in Chicago. Not too long after that he was running a life drawing class and from there Aaron spawned a costumed workshop, and FIW was born.

One of the few sessions in the figure drawing community that always has a costumed model, Aaron wanted a way for illustrators to attend an event to sharpen their skills. And if they wanted to use it for their portfolio they wouldn't just have the typical nude model drawings.

"It's a small workshop, usually around 10 to 16 people," he says. "Over time I've

changed the structure of the workshop to best meet the needs of the attendees. It would be awesome to get a few more people or even be able to add more sessions," Aaron says.

The sessions so far have included pin-up models, trapeze artists and cosplayers. "It's a rare chance for some artists to paint from a costumed model from life as well as have an opportunity to take some reference shots for a possible personal project," adds Aaron.

"I get to invite people to a painting session that I would want to attend myself. It puts me in touch with models for the event as well as painting reference shoots. It connects me with the community at large and I've found it's a



Costumes include everything from Black Swan (pictured) to Barbara Gordon's Batgirl.

great way to meet friends and new artists outside of my studio.

"For the attendees they also get to work from life and grab some fun reference shots if they choose to continue the painting or drawing at home."

Aaron hopes to add more focus to the workshops in the future, and is considering adding a weekend class with more instruction and model time.

So if you're in the Chicago area and think figure drawing could benefit your art (and it almost always could), keep watching this space!



For more information about Chicago's Figurative Illustration Workshop, check out the group's blog at <http://bit.ly/FigIllWor>

Creative Space Figurative Illustration



Star Wars fans were in for a real treat at this workshop. Many of the costumes are hired from Chicago Costume.



Intriguingly this model (above) provided her own costume for this session.

During the Halloween Zombie workshop makeup artist Scott Mitchell posed as the undead's victim.

COSTUME CAPERS

A multitude of costumes has lead to a multitude of art at FIW sessions



Aaron Miller's painting of Black Swan, in oils.



One of Aaron's favourite workshops was The Supergirl.



A gorgeous watercolour from the Halloween Zombie workshop.



Aaron's interpretation of a DC Comics supervillain.



A supervillain colour pencil sketch by Amy Robillard.

Workshops

Charcoal

IMPROVE YOUR CHARCOAL ART

PATRICK J JONES shares his personal techniques and thought processes on squeezing the ultimate artistic expression out of charcoal and blenders

When cave people first dragged a stick of charcoal across a cave wall the artist was born. Today that same primitive tool is unmatched for creating instant, expressive marks. In this workshop I'll share my favourite charcoal tips, and demonstrate how to manipulate that black, magic powder once it's laid down on paper.

Charcoal techniques are often discarded by students once art school has ended and they move on to the serious

MATERIALS

CHARCOAL

- Willow charcoal
- Conté a Paris charcoal pencil

OTHER TOOLS

- Kneadable erasers
- Plastic eraser
- Butcher's paper
- Cartridge paper
- Conté a Paris crayon
- Leather chamois

business of art, but as a working artist I can attest to the importance of charcoal in the professional world of art. With all the wonderful digital and traditional painting tools at my disposal, my first port of call is still charcoal and paper.

Why has my love of charcoal drawing endured? The answer is simple, and a little bit romantic. No matter where you are in the world, every tool you need to create great art can be carried in a small satchel. To illustrate that idea I'm looking forward to running a charcoal drawing workshop in Fiji next summer. No

electricity or satellite is required to sit down on a mountaintop or under a shady tree, smudge some charcoal across a blank space, and experience the same kind of magic our ancestors felt.



Patrick lives in Australia and is the author of the best-selling book, *Sci-Fi & Fantasy Oil Painting Techniques*. Its companion books *The Anatomy of Style*, a look at his personal approach to drawing the figure, and *The Sci-Fi & Fantasy Art of Patrick J Jones*, a coffee table book of his art, are in the works. www.pjartworks.com



1 Cheaper than chips

I usually advocate buying the best art materials you can afford, because it usually works out cheaper in the long run (buy cheap, buy twice), but in the odd case of charcoal there's no better drawing surface than the cheapest paper there is: butcher's paper (the stuff they wrap your fish and chips in). You can buy it in pads, but for the 'monk on a budget' option, rolls are cheaper still.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

2 Willow the wisp

Willow charcoal is the most versatile type of charcoal, and also the cheapest. To achieve the maximum variety of strokes I sharpen the sticks on sandpaper in my own particular fashion. I rub one side down to a flat state and then tip it up to sharpen the top edge off to a point. This gives me a stick that can produce flat blocks of tone, razor-sharp edges when turned on its side, and fine detail from the tip.

I sharpen three different sizes: one broad, one medium and one fine for producing very small details. Because they are easily broken, I keep them in old-fashioned tins bought from novelty stores and then pad them for protection with tissue, which I use for blending.

“No matter where you are in the world, every tool you need to create art can be carried in a small satchel”



3 Introducing textures

There are many ways to create texture with charcoal. In this sample I simply scrunched up some tissue and dabbed it into the charcoal surface, turning it to create random effects as I go. Afterwards, I picked out some highlights I liked with a kneadable eraser. You can also place your paper over a textured surface and burnish charcoal on top. When burnishing on top of a rock texture, make sure to draw with a series of light passes because the paper can rip very easily.



4 The right blend

Blending stumps have been around since the 15th century and are simply rolled-up paper pointed at the ends. They are cheap and usually come in packs of various sizes. Stumps are terrific for blending details and can produce extremely realistic effects. I like to keep blenders at different life stages because the dirty ones can be used to draw ghostly lines that are more subtle than pencil lines. For very small soft blends you can use cotton buds.

5 Keep a sketchbook

Here is a charcoal rough from my sketchbook that was scanned and given some highlights in Photoshop via a Screen layer, along with some sepia tone using the Hue/Saturation sliders. I'll fill pages with rough charcoal ideas for possible future paintings. It's always amazing for me to go back in time through these drawings and see the genesis of major oil paintings. With constant drawing practice the pencil takes on a life of its own, because I usually have no idea what I'm going to create until it's done. It's a kind of magic.

“It's always amazing to go back in time through these drawings and see the genesis of major oil paintings”



6 Chamois pour moi

It's off to the car shop for this art fancy. It's the leather cloth used for washing car windows. I got this tip from the great Glenn Vilppu and it appears to be a secret the art stores are unaware of. Throw it straight in the wash to launder the oil out and you'll be left with the softest cloth on the planet, which is perfect for wiping back areas of charcoal without disturbing the fabric of the paper. Don't buy the synthetic version, because it'll come out of the wash all bent up like stiff cardboard.

7 *All finger and thumbs*

At the end of our hands are thick blending stumps of different sizes that are not only free, but can be used for a lifetime! The great thing about fingers and thumbs is that they're tapered with soft edges. The act of blending and drawing with these dirty digits is an artistic freedom that will happily take you back to kindergarten. ➡➡



Step by Step: Think like a painter



1 GET MORE FROM YOUR LIFE-DRAWING SESSIONS

Drawing the figure from life is one of the art world's toughest challenges, and also a great and memorable art experience. It's also an essential exercise to keep your drawing hand fluid. In the tradition of the Old Masters some of my life drawings, like this one, are studies for oil paintings. You can hire life models by forming an art group and all chipping in for the cost, which can be just as affordable as rocking up at a life-drawing class and paying at the door. That way, like me, you can request poses from your sketchbooks. Here I lightly draw in the form with a large piece of charcoal as I would for an underpainting in oils.



2 ENSURE THAT YOU DRAW WITH YOUR WHOLE ARM

I always draw the figure as a whole, rather than completing it in detailed parts. To keep the drawing fluid I draw using my 'gesture hand', which is achieved by holding the charcoal under the palm. To do this simply lay your charcoal on a flat surface and pick it up using all your fingers and thumb. The gesture hand will enable you to draw large, sweeping strokes because you'll be using your arm rather than just your wrist to draw with. Here I'm going over the entire figure a second time and refining the lines as I draw. I'm using kneadable erasers at this stage, not so much for erasing mistakes, but more often for bringing out the highlights.



3 LEAVE ROOM FOR THE VIEWER'S IMAGINATION

By the third pass my drawing is more fluid and stylish, as by this point I know it well, which is a by-product of treating the drawing as a whole. I'm thinking of the line quality now, which I usually keep thinner on the light side and heavier on the shadow side. I leave some lines open for the viewer to 'fill in', which keeps the drawing fresh.

I recommend drawing from life as a constant artistic lifestyle. As a painter I find each artwork that much easier because of the countless hours spent drawing the figure. To quote a great American painter: "The important thing is to keep on drawing when you start to paint. Never graduate from drawing." (John Sloan, 1871-1951.)

“The important thing is to keep on drawing when you start to paint. Never graduate from drawing”



8 Make use of tissue

Tissue paper is fantastic for blending large areas and ghosting back a drawing, and as it gets dirty you can then use it as a drawing tool in its own right. It's fantastic for gradations and creating misty effects.



9 Compressed charcoal

Charcoal compressed into pencil has a whole different attitude. The marks are harder to erase for one thing, but this enables us to blend charcoal on top without the lines vanishing, and also wipe away charcoal underneath. I prefer using Conté pencils, because the lead marks are matte in nature and less reflective than traditional glossy pencil marks, and are therefore easier to photograph for publication.



10 Sharpen using sandpaper

The fragility of charcoal sticks makes sharpening with a traditional pencil sharpener out of the question. Fine sandpaper is the best option, with art-store sandpaper blocks being very convenient. Charcoal wears down quickly so I tend to sharpen lots of sticks so that I'm not wasting time constantly sharpening at life-drawing sessions.



11 Dust to dust

I'm always aware of waste, having started my career with empty pockets and knowing the value of art materials. All that sharpening of charcoal leaves a secondary prize in the form of charcoal dust, which can be saved in a jar and used with tissue to smear large swathes of tone. Alternatively, you buy it ready made in a jar if you use a lot of it.



12 An eraser for every task

Kneadable erasers are the eraser of choice. They can be moulded and shaped to erase the smallest details and don't shed like traditional erasers, meaning you won't accidentally wipe away your drawing when brushing off eraser debris. I keep the dirty ones as they erase less and therefore can be very subtle. Plastic erasers are useful when a mark needs to be fully erased. I only use the plastic erasers at the absolute end of a drawing for extreme highlights, because they can be destructive to the paper surface, especially on butcher's paper.



13 Apply the right fixative at the right time

Charcoal is easily smudged, which is what makes it so versatile, but it's also what makes it fragile. If a certain drawing is worth preserving we can spray fix it, meaning we can stop the charcoal being smudged. Usually we fix a drawing when it's finished, but workable fixative enables us to fix it at various stages and work on top, almost like layers in Photoshop. If you're in a fix (!) and have no fixative at hand, a squirt of hairspray will do the trick, leaving you with some sweet 'art du parfum'.

Brush Pen Pencil

DRAWING ANIMALS IN ACTION

Posing animals is all about line of action and gesture, says **BRYNN METHENEY**. Don't feel intimidated about getting everything right on your first go

Drawing believable poses and gestures comes from study and observation of animals in zoos and in the wild. Watching documentaries is a great way to get a glimpse of animal movement and behaviour.

Try to capture your pose in the wireframe skeleton first, and indicate the joints and the pelvis and shoulders. Think about how the legs support the whole body of the animal and where the spine lies in between the back and front legs.

Because I'm drawing and not taking a photo, I need to exaggerate those poses slightly to make them feel alive. You'll notice that if you draw, piece for piece, a photograph of an animal then it can look a little stiff. But if you round out that leg more or push the angle of the shoulder, you'll add life to your drawing. Such an approach is common among animators.

As you draw, keep your arm loose. It's a good idea to not only think like an animator, but to move like one. Draw with your whole arm and try not to work only

MATERIALS

- Pentel Pocket Brush pen
- B Caran D'ache Graffwood pencil
- Kneaded eraser
- Acid-free sketchbook paper

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 6 now!

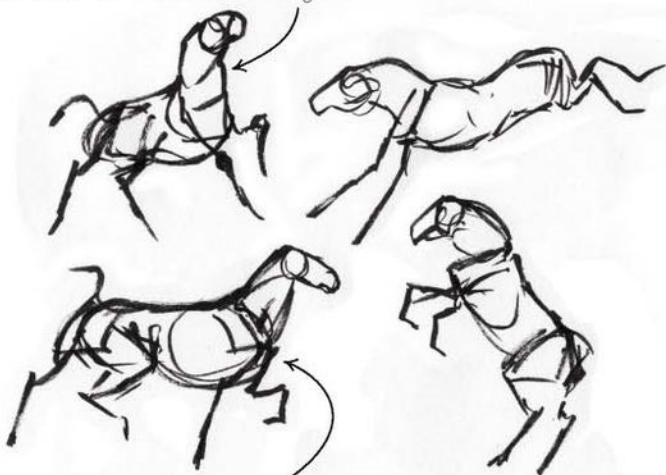
from your wrist. Sometimes this means repositioning your hand that's holding your pencil or standing up to draw. Finally, when posing animals, consider acting out the pose. If the animal is stretching or standing alert, acting out those attitudes can help inform your drawing.



Brynn specialises in creature design, fantasy illustration and visual development for film, games and publishing. She lives and works in Oakland, California.

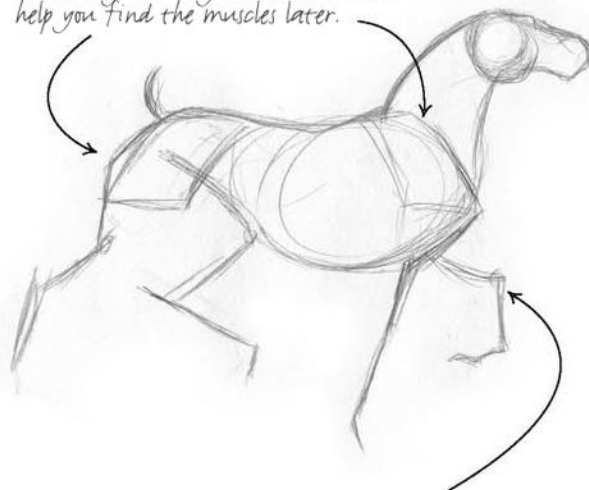
www.brynnart.com

When I scribble out poses, I'll use a marker so I keep moving and don't worry too much about accuracy. This way I can just find the motion of the subject.



Move quickly – it's best to start a pose when you've made a mistake than to linger and try to correct the old one. This helps to keep things spontaneous looking.

Find those shoulders and pelvis! Using the box is a great way to indicate which way the body's headed. It can help you find the muscles later.



Beginning with the wireframe not only helps find your pose, but you can begin to figure out where the joints and landmarks lie.

1 Warm up!

Now is the time to scribble! I find that in posing animals, it helps to sketch a bit to get out the kinks and get a rhythm going. It also helps to find a good pose to build upon. When you're at the zoo, the technique comes in handy for drawing fast.

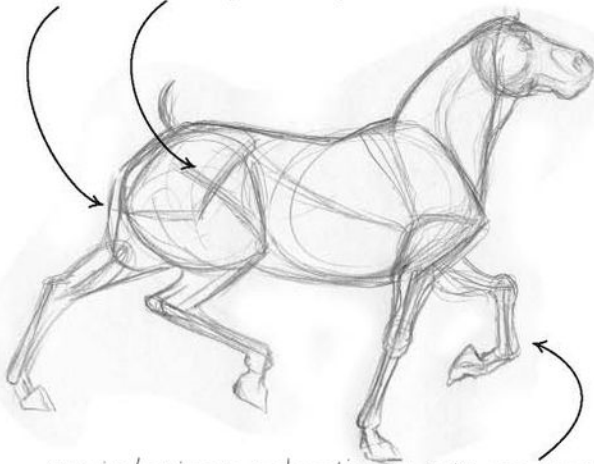
MARKERS

PERMANENCE CAN HELP
Using a pen can help you make better decisions, because it can force you to move from drawing to drawing, instead of fixing errors.

2 Find the pose

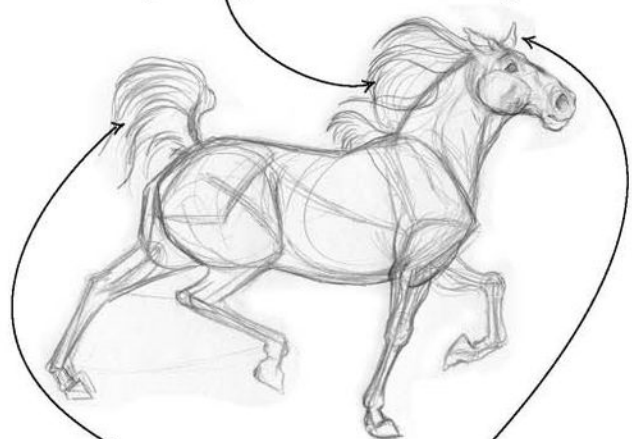
Now that I've warmed up, I can find the pose that I'd like to flesh out. I begin with a wireframe to indicate where the skeleton is and what the overall pose is. Because I'm drawing this in perspective, I use boxes to help indicate the direction of the pelvis and shoulders.

As I draw muscle groups, I think about the shapes. I squash and stretch the muscles depending on the position they're in, to indicate that they're flexing.



Now is the time to make adjustments. You can pencil in over what you've already drawn to correct your sketch.

showing the mane flowing in the wind as the horse moves forward is a great way to show that it's trotting



study animal expression and behaviour. That lifted tail demonstrates confidence, while the ears show that the horse is also being cautious.

3 Block in muscle

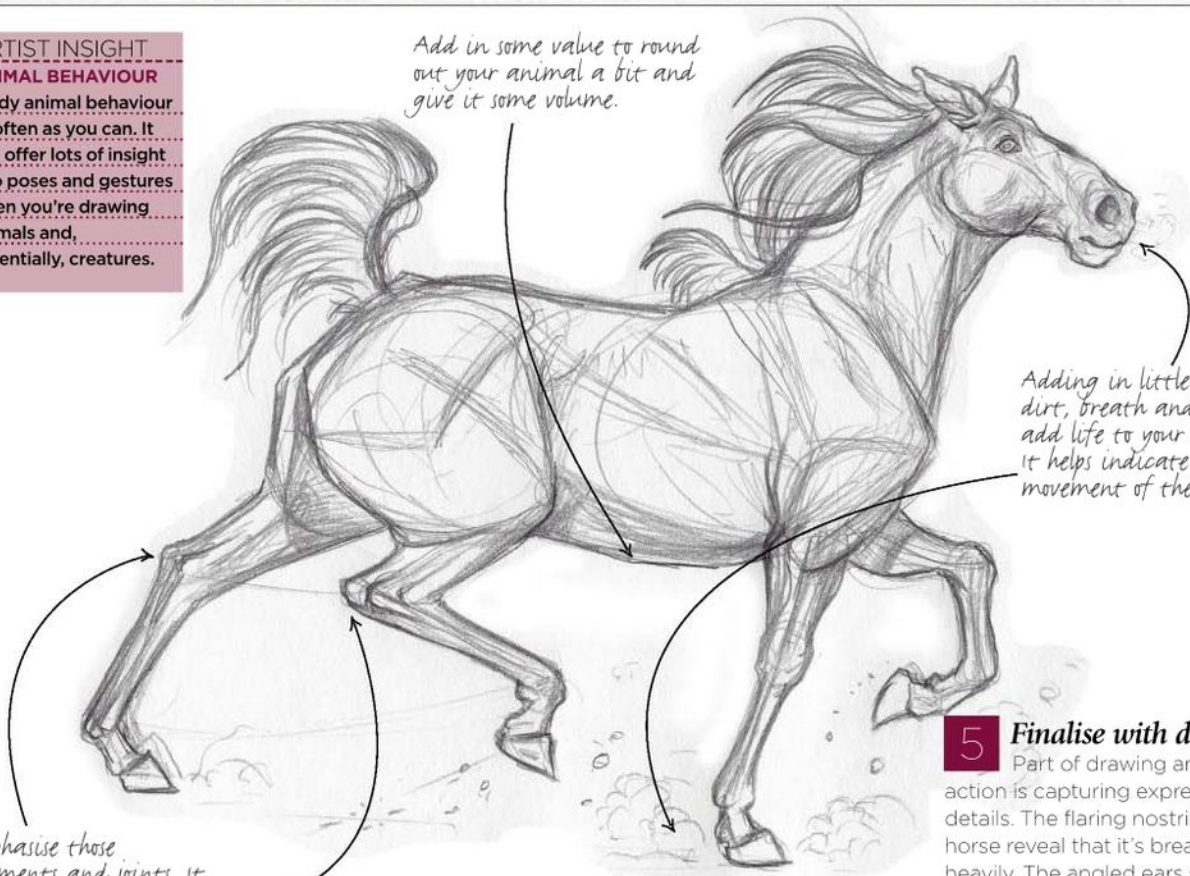
Back in part three, we covered muscle blocking. The same process applies here. We need to find those muscle groups and be aware of our landmarks. I squash and stretch the muscles according to where they're pulling, pushed and pulled. This is where acting it out can help you feel how that pose would look.

4 Add in features and movement

Now we can begin to add in features to indicate movement. The mane on the horse is a great indicator of what the rest of the body is doing. I indicate the action of the mane and show that it's flowing behind the horse. The tail adds expression and can also indicate motion.

ARTIST INSIGHT
ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR
Study animal behaviour as often as you can. It can offer lots of insight into poses and gestures when you're drawing animals and, potentially, creatures.

Add in some value to round out your animal a bit and give it some volume.



Adding in little puffs of dirt, breath and dust can add life to your drawing. It helps indicate the movement of the animal.

Emphasise those ligaments and joints. It helps to sell the strain that's on the animal's limbs and muscles.

5 Finalise with detail

Part of drawing animals in action is capturing expressions and details. The flaring nostrils of the horse reveal that it's breathing heavily. The angled ears show that it's cautious but confident. Adding in bits of dirt and dust can help sell the idea that the horse is moving.

First Impressions

✧ **Marc Gabbana** ✧

Comics had an early impact on this artist's creative outlook



Where did you grow up, and when did you realise that you had a talent for painting?

I was born in France and lived there until I was 11. My family then moved to Canada where I lived until 2002. I currently reside in San Francisco, California. While attending grade school in France, I distinctly remember painting with gouache on early school assignments. I was fascinated by the way water and pigment combined to make beautiful colours. I know that's what first hooked me on painting!

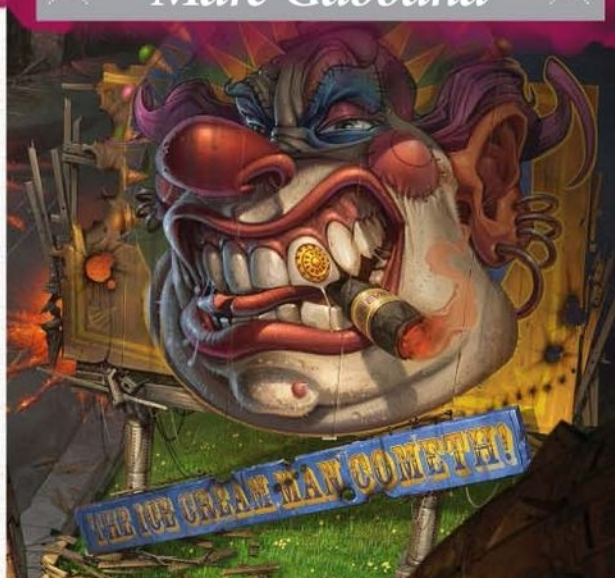
Did your upbringing influence your style of painting in any way?

In France, I remember drawing more than painting at that stage of my early artistic life. I was drawn to the French comic books of the times, and enjoyed reading and copying the images from my favourites such as Asterix, Tintin, Blueberry and Lucky Luke. It was during my high school years that I started painting more seriously, and I was lucky enough to have excellent teachers who taught me the mechanics of painting.

How and when did you discover sci-fi and fantasy art?

Early on, looking at art by Hergé, Mœbius and Frazetta provided a glimpse into other artists' reality and I loved studying their images. Of course, when Star Wars was released in 1977, my 11-year-old self was awakened to the even more tangible possibilities of fantastic art. When I discovered Ralph McQuarrie, it felt like a floodgate of imagination had burst open and I focused on becoming a real artist.

I realised that images drawn and painted on paper could become these fascinating and unique worlds depicted in the cinema. The only limit was imagination. Imagination became my unfailing currency as an artist. The more one had of it, the more exciting the artistic journey, and I embarked on this life-long pursuit of creating original art.



OVERKILL

A watchful, cigar chompin' evil clown peers down from a billboard, oblivious to the destruction that he's sowed all around him.

How valuable was your early work painting for advertising agencies?

I loved agency work because I could refine my skills and get paid for it. The deadlines were short and I enjoyed working fast. I particularly liked working with markers to create comps and creating more finished gouache paintings for various campaigns. At that point, I wasn't using a computer and all my artwork was done traditionally. The workflow that I developed then transitioned seamlessly into my digital work, years later.

“Looking at a blank piece of paper is an invitation to unleash my creativity”

EMBRYONIX

Yin Yang expresses itself as the unity of two opposing forces. It's a dance between the formed and the yet unrealised potential.



What's been the highlight of your career so far? Have there been any low points? Working on Star Wars Episodes I and II as a concept artist was the realisation of a boyhood dream! I was also lucky enough to become good friends with my mentors Ralph McQuarrie and Syd Mead. Low points usually involved working on projects that didn't interest me. Boredom isn't artistically fulfilling.

To date, what's been your most challenging concept art commission or assignment?

Working on Star Wars Episode II and The Matrix Reloaded and Revolutions provided me with a unique opportunity to invent architecture and vehicle designs. My pen and marker sketches were instrumental in shaping the look of those movies. Looking at a blank piece of paper is an invitation to dream up imaginative concepts and unleash my creativity. I love being able to tap deeply into my artistic well and create unique designs that help shape the look of a production. I apply the same level of care on my own artwork as well.

Have you considered teaching your skills to others?

I occasionally enjoy mentoring budding artists, but am not really drawn to being an art instructor in a traditional sense. I have a couple of videos available from the Gnomon workshop in Los Angeles and have heard good feedback about them from students. They appreciate my thorough way of developing images. I plan to create more instructional videos to share my way of working - from sketches to more finished traditional and digital illustrations.

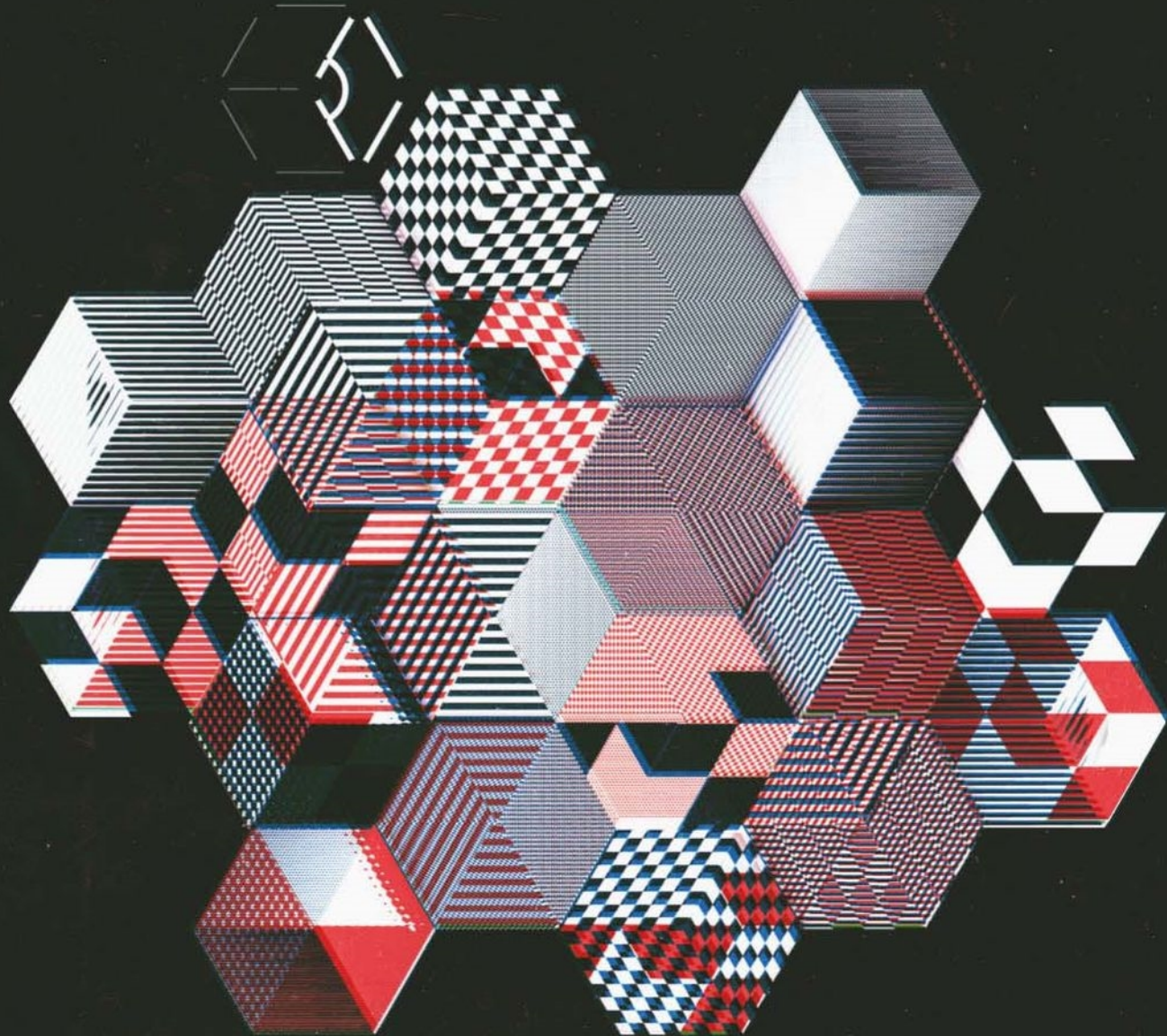
Do you make a conscious effort to achieve a work-life balance?

Yes, I'm a dreamer and I apply creativity to all aspects of my life.

In just one sentence, how would you sum up your work?

My creative impulse is to capture and render with exquisite detail the stream of wild imagery that is forever coursing through me.

Marc's concept film work includes The Polar Express, Hellboy and War of the Worlds. You can see more of his film, advertising and publishing work at www.marcgabbana.com.



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